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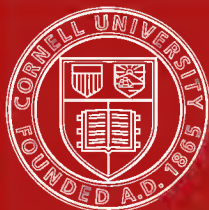
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THE
REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS
OF THE
COURT OF KING'S BENCH,
IN THE GUILDHALL, LONDON,
ON THE 12TH, 13TH, 14TH, AND 15TH DAYS OF OCTOBER;
BEING THE
MOCK TRIALS
OF
RICHARD CARLILE,
FOR
ALLEDGED BLASPHEMOUS LIBELS,
IN PUBLISHING
THOMAS PAINE'S THEOLOGICAL WORKS
AND
Elihu Palmer's Principles of Nature;
BEFORE
LORD CHIEF JUSTICE ABBOTT,
AND SPECIAL JURIES.

London :

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY R. CARLILE, 55, FLEET
STREET.

1822.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS report of the proceedings on these Mock Trials, will be read with increasing interest as the human mind proceeds to burst the shackles of Priestcraft, and to expand over the boundless volume of Nature. Whatever lack of ability or of education the attempted Defence of the Defendant displays, still these pages are sufficient to shew the deluders and the deluded, that their delusion could not stand the examination he was prepared to make, and that brute force was found to be the only resource of the interested supporters of superstition, against free and fair discussion. Here the historian will find a connecting link to display the mischief and intolerance of all religion, by the sufferings of the various seceders from the religion of power from time to time. Let it be hoped that it will end here. Certain it is, that the delusion of religion is losing its hold, and that hypocrites and tyrants will not much longer make it an instrument of power to rob, or a rod of iron to rule the multitude.

It cannot fail of being interesting to the reader to find inserted here a narrative of what occurred from the first publication of the Theological Works of Thomas Paine, down to the commencement of the Mock Trials.

In the month of November, 1818, a rumour was afloat in London that the "Age of Reason" was on sale, or about to be published. The Priests were instantly in arms, and terror seemed to forbode that their shops were falling or being knocked down about their ears. Threats were made of the immediate seizure of the edition on its appearance (a circumstance which actually occurred in Pitt's time) but the publisher, was not to be intimidated, he knew too well the ground on which he stood, and how far he could go in the matter. Discussion occurred in the public papers as to the propriety or impropriety of suppressing the publication, and it was evident to all that the bigots were silenced. At length the publication was ready on the 16th December, and in the evening of that day the walls of the metropolis were well placarded with the notice of publication.

On the morning of the 17th, a messenger came from the Solicitor of the Treasury to enquire the actual publication and the price, but on finding they were sold at half a guinea the copy he retired, not having been furnished with money enough to make his purchase. In a very few minutes he returned for three copies, and was advised by the publisher to take half a dozen. The Publisher sent his compliments to the Solicitor to the Treasury by the messenger, and re-

quested him not to obtain his warrant immediately, as he had an engagement for Christmas-day. No arrest however took place, nor was any bail required on the part of the Attorney General, who was an honourable fellow, when compared with his successor Gifford.

The sale of the work went on very slow and the Publisher had began to fear that it would not be prosecuted, as a month elapsed without hearing of any thing of the kind. On the 16th January he was agreeably disappointed, at the information, that, the Vice Society had submitted a bill to the Grand Jury which was found true, and to prevent an arrest he took his bail to the Old Bailey the same evening. This happened on the Saturday evening: the circumstance was noticed in a few of the Sunday papers, and subsequently in all the daily ones: the sale increased rapidly—the first edition of one thousand copies was quickly sold, and an edition of 3000 more got up with all expedition.

The indictment at the instance of the prosecutors was moved into the Court of King's Bench, to which the Publisher imparled on the first day of Hilary Term. At the same time he was called upon to plead to an Information *ex officio* by the Attorney General for the same publication; to this he also imparled, which circumstance, it appeared, subsequently produced one of the Six Acts to put a stop to imparling!

Enraged at the extensive circulation of the work, the Vice Society sent their Solicitor to Chief Justice Abbott to obtain a warrant on the ground that the sale of the work was continued, and that they intended to prosecute a second indictment. This piece of villainy was acquiesced in by the Judge, and the Publisher was arrested on the evening of the 11th February, so late as eight o'clock, and on going before Mr. Justice Holroyd at his Chambers in Sergeant's Inn, he protested against the legality, or the necessity of the arrest, and refused to give bail, upon which the agent of the Society moved for his committal to Newgate, and the pliant old Judge acquiesced by saying, that the sale of every book was a distinct offence and indictable. He was answered, if such was the case, he would find enough to do to try them all. That this arrest was a piece of villainy the result proved, as there could be no possible means of stopping the sale of the books, and the trial of one indictment would be as well as the trial of one hundred, or the whole 4000 copies which have been actually sold, so as not to have a dozen copies left, and even now, so great is the private demand for them, that it answers any and every person's purpose to print them. The sale of them never can be suppressed in this country, therefore all further prosecution is vain, and mere personal malignity and annoyance. The publisher will now through his agents print, and sell another edition before he quits his Prison, and what proof is further necessary of the inutility of all such prosecutions?

He found himself within the walls of Newgate, soon after ten o'clock, at an hour when he could not even find a prison-bed to

lay on, and was obliged to sit up the whole night; but was made comfortable, as far as fire, and candle, and a decent room could be so.

THE FOLLOWING ARE THE COPIES OF THE WARRANT AND COMMITTAL TO NEWGATE.

“COPY OF WARRANT.”

“ENGLAND, (to wit).—Whereas it appeareth unto me by the affidavit of George Prichard, and the affidavit of Thomas Fair, that an indictment was found by the Grand Jury for the city of London, against Richard Carlile, late of London, bookseller, for selling a certain blasphemous libel, intituled “Paine’s Age of Reason,” which indictment has been removed and filed in his Majesty’s Court of King’s Bench, and to which the said Richard Carlile appeared in the said Court, and gave recognizance to plead thereto within the first eight days of the next Easter Term. And that since the said Richard Carlile hath entered into the said recognizance, he hath sold another copy of the said libel to the said Thomas Fair, for which said last mentioned offence, the said George Prichard intends to prosecute the said Richard Carlile in the said Court of King’s Bench. These are therefore to will and require, and in his Majesty’s name, strictly to charge and command you, and every of you on sight hereof, to apprehend and take the body of the said Richard, and bring him before me or one other of the said Judges of his Majesty’s Court of King’s Bench, if taken in or near the cities of London and Middlesex, if elsewhere, before some Justice of the Peace near to the place where he shall be herewith taken. To the end that he the said Richard Carlile may become bound to the King’s Majesty in the sum of £200, together with two sufficient sureties in the sum of £100 each, for the appearance of the said Richard Carlile in his Majesty’s Court of King’s Bench, on the first day of next Easter Term, to answer to all and singular indictments against him for publishing the said libel, and to appear from day to day in the said Court, and not depart until discharged by the said Court. Hereof fail not at your peril. Given under my hand and seal the eleventh day of February, 1819.

(L. S.

“C. ABBOTT.”

“To Thomas Gibbons, gentleman, my
tipstaff, or any other tipstaff of his
Majesty’s Court of King’s Bench,
and to all chief and petty constables,
headboroughs, tything man, and all
others whom these may concern.”

“COPY OF COMMITTAL.

“THE within named Richard Carlile having been brought before me this day, by virtue of the within warrant, and not having sufficient sureties to answer to the offence in the within mentioned warrant, is committed to the custody of the Keeper of his Majesty’s goal of Newgate, being the common gaol of the city of London, where the said Richard Carlile was apprehended upon the said warrant.

“Receive the body of the within named Richard Carlile into your custody, and him safely keep until he the said Richard Carlile shall be discharged by due course of law.

“Dated the 11th of February, 1819.

“G. S. HOLROYD.”

“To Mr. William Robert Henry Brown, Keeper
of his Majesty’s gaol of Newgate.”

This arrest and committal to Newgate gave a fresh stimulus to the sale of the publication, and the Publisher having tried the Gang to see how far they would go, had nothing to do but to get out again, which he did on the 15th, and on being removed again to the Judge's Chambers to give bail, an attempt was made to extort a promise to sell no more of the same work. Mr. Justice Bailey the celebrated political economist, who sees a vast benefit to the country from a ruinous debt and taxation, and the no less celebrated theologian, who allows every one to think as they like, but if they write, or speak, it must be by some rule and standard to avoid fine and imprisonment, was the Judge present.

Mr. Justice Bailey.—Will the Defendant give a promise not to sell any more of the same work?

Defendant.—No. I act under my own conception of right and shall proceed.

His Judgeship then gave his politico-theologico-economico head a Christian shake, but made no answer. The agent of the gang moved for heavy bail, which was refused, and common bail taken. Whilst in Newgate the Publisher wrote the following letter to his Persecutors, which, as it is out of print, is here reprinted being strictly a part of this narrative.

“ A LETTER TO THE SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE,

“ On their malignant Efforts to prevent a free Enquiry after Truth and Reason.

“ ASSOCIATED PERSECUTORS,

“ THAT envenomed and malign spirit which you have so prominently displayed, during the short time since you have turned your attentions towards my publications, precludes the necessity of my offering any apology for addressing you in a public letter.

“ Having immured me within the walls of a prison, methinks I see a demoniac smile glide over your several cheeks with the glowing expression of “ we have now crushed him.”—Be not too sanguine; feeble as my efforts may be to propagate those principles, on which, (according to my humble conceptions,) the basis of true morality and virtue must be founded, nor the fear of imprisonment, nor the fear of death shall deter me from a perseverance. What is the religion you profess, that you are so much alarmed at every attempt to investigate its merits? What is the basis of your pretended morality and virtue, when you betray a fear of being left naked as the breeze leaves the stem of the woolly dandelion? What is that chimerical faith in which you pretend to centre your future hopes, if you fear the result of your fellow mortal's enquiry into it? On what ground must the established and dissenting codes of religion of which you boast, (and express your determination to support, by imprisonments and punishments of such persons as shall attempt to inspect its foundation,) be raised, when a small volume of enquiry into its origin shakes its very centre, and threatens a total annihilation? Pause! ye deluded and deluding hypocrites, and I will compromise the matter with you. But how? Shall it be an instance

of that nature where many individuals whom you have laid under the charge of vending, what both you and I consider obscene and objectionable books and prints, have more than once satisfied your virtuous scruples by a fee? Pray, would my paying all the expences you have incurred in this prosecution, satiate that appetite which feeds on virtue whilst it falsely affects to destroy vice? Is your answer—yes? I disdain it. Nothing but a fair exposition of both our views shall induce me to compromise this important question; rendered the more important, because a sycophantic and hypocritical society—a refined banditti attempts to crush it in its bud. No, the compromise I will make with you shall be, either, that you shall renounce those persecutions you have instituted against me, or I will expose your object in all its hideous features. Although, like the assassin, you endeavour to conceal both your names and intentions, and make a hungry Lawyer* your instrument, yet the community at large, who have been more injured than amended by your false pretences, will assist me in depicting your banditti in its real colours.

“By every exertion and enquiry that I could make, I have not been able to obtain a list of your names, and am given to understand that no such thing has been published for many years past. It appears, that in the earlier part of your institution, you regularly published your names, but that the infamy which has, of late, been attached to your proceedings, has deterred you from continuing it. As the best proof of virtue arises when it is exposed to the fangs of vice, I challenge you to proceed in your persecutions. But let us here examine how the question stands between us. I have published a book, the contents of which you charge to be impious, blasphemous, and profane, tending to bring into disrepute the Christian Religion. I reply, that this book does not merit the charge instituted against it, nor has it any other tendency than that of bringing into disrepute the religions that are not supported by human reason or divine authority.

“Did any thing but vindictive malice guide your councils, you would have waited the time when I should have been placed before a jury of my own countrymen, and there receive the reward, or punishment consequent on their verdict. But no! the Society for the Suppression of Vice cannot suppress their appetite for rancorous punishment, but seize their victim, tear him from a fond agonized family, and within two hours lodge him within the walls of Newgate. For what? for doing that, which, whether it is an offence or not, is but matter of opinion. The publication can injure no one but those panders who prey on the vitals of their country. The publication, I admit, may be offensive to some, but not to the virtuous and well meaning part of the community; it is* offensive to those persons only who are interested in supporting the corruptions and abuses of the system we live under.

“You appear to be following the course which the Attorney General (Shepherd) followed towards me in 1817, in regard to the Parodies†; that is you have no hopes of being able to obtain the verdict of a jury against

* Prichard, of Essex-street, in the Strand, whose clerks and inmates are used as informers to this Society.

† The writer of this letter was eighteen weeks in the King's Bench Prison for re-publishing the Parodies, and was never brought to trial; it was he who challenged the Attorney General to bring the Parodies before a jury, which led to so grand and noble a result.

the work, and you are anxious to glut your vengeance with punishment before trial.

"I doubt whether any of you who have instigated these Prosecutions have ever read the Theological Writings of Thomas Paine, for if you had read them, and had possessed the least conception of vice and virtue, you would have found nothing of a vicious tendency in them, you would have found nothing that came within the province of your professions to prosecute.

"Have you no priests in your Society? Why do you not set them to write a volume of the same size to refute the arguments and assertions of Paine? I will pledge myself to sell it with the other. Is there not a Bishop amongst you that can again attempt to do what Watson has vainly attempted? For shame! do not attempt to destroy by the sword of perverted law what so many bishops and priests are so well qualified to destroy by argument and reason. For what do they receive so many thousands of the public money? For what have we universities and colleges, and so many thousand Priests who have to boast of collegiate education? unless it is to support by argument, intellectual reasoning, and controversial disputation, the several doctrines and dogmas which they profess to teach, and wish us to believe. For shame! I say again, spur them on, and do not let their professions be set at nought by a few untutored minds. They must either do this, or raise again the blood-stained standard of the cross, and again enforce their doctrines by the sword.

"Christianity, like the material world, has had its rise, its progress, and is now experiencing its decay, but differs in this point, that there is no hope of its regenerating or revivifying. And vain will be the attempt to oppose it to human reason. The press, that dreadful park of artillery, will continue to open its destructive fire on superstition, bigotry, and religious and civil despotism; and what shall check its career?

"Hear, ye promoters of theological dissensions, and tremble, whilst I tell you, that you possess the same dispositions as your ancestors, who kindled the flames in Smithfield. Would public opinion tolerate it, you would pursue me to the stake with the same satisfaction you have pursued me to a prison. Reserving for a better opportunity any further opinions and observations on your character, conduct, and views as a Society, I would beg leave to call your attention to a work lately published in London, entitled the "*Principles of Nature*," by Elihu Palmer, the first chapter of which I will here insert as a specimen, which is strictly applicable to our relative situations, with the exception of a few of the first sentences.

[As this work was subsequently prosecuted and as the chapter forms part of the Report of these Proceedings it is omitted here.]

"I presume, Gentlemen; since you have attempted to suppress certain creeds as well as vice, that each of you are in duty bound to peruse this work, of which this is a part and specimen, it is a work which I hold in estimation, and consequently requires your attention.

"I hope I shall have the pleasure of selling a few copies of this work to your Honourable Society, whether for the purpose of a prosecution or not, I am quite indifferent, as I hold Paine's opinion to be good, that under a bad government it is well to have a good work prosecuted.

"I am, Gentlemen, your firm opponent,

"Newgate, Feb. 13th, 1819."

"R. CARLILE."

On the 22nd February, Mr. Waithman presented the following Petition to the House of Commons, and in so doing, appeared anxious to be considered by the House, as unconnected with the Petitioner.

“ TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

“ *The PETITION of RICHARD CARLILE, of Fleet Street, in the City of London, Bookseller.*

“ HUMBLY SHEWETH,

“ THAT your Petitioner in consequence of a Bill brought into your Honourable House by his Majesty's then Attorney-General, Sir Vicary Gibbs, entitled, “ An Act to enable his Majesty to hold to bail in cases of Libel,” has repeatedly been exposed to frivolous and vexatious arrests.

“ That your Petitioner, on or about the fourteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventeen, was arrested on the authority of three warrants issued by Mr. Justice Holroyd on the oath of one Griffin Swanson, a common informer, who deposed that your Petitioner had published three several impious and profane Libels. That pursuant to that arrest, your Petitioner was committed to the Kings Bench prison, by Mr. Justice Holroyd, in default of bail required on the three several warrants. That your Petitioner was confined in the aforesaid prison until the twentieth day of December, of the year aforesaid, when he was liberated on his own recognizances, without an opportunity of justifying his conduct before a jury of his countrymen, or rescuing his character from the reproach which had wantonly been heaped upon it.

“ That your Petitioner, on the sixteenth day of January in the present year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and nineteen, was informed that a Bill of Indictment had been found against him by the Grand Jury then sitting at the Old Bailey Sessions, on the oath of one Charles Jones, a common informer, who deposed also that your Petitioner had published a certain impious and profane Libel, entitled “ The Theological Works of Thomas Paine,” and that your Petitioner to prevent an arrest, did put in bail to appear and answer to such charge. That on the nineteenth day of January in the year aforesaid, your Petitioner found that a writ of *Certiorari* had been obtained to remove the said indictment into the the Court of King's Bench, your Petitioner caused a notice to be served on the proper parties that your Petitioner would appear in the Court of King's Bench on the first day of the following (Hilary) term, and then and there answer to such indictment or any other indictments or informations that might then and there be preferred against him, and put in such bail as the Court may require. That your Petitioner did accordingly put in bail to appear and answer to the said indictment, and also to an information which had been filed *ex officio*, against the said publication by his Majesty's Attorney-General, Sir Samuel Shepherd, Knight, and your Petitioner left the court with an idea that he had fully satisfied the prosecuting parties of his appearance to defend his intentions in publishing the said alleged Libel.

“ And further sheweth, that your Petitioner, conscious of the rectitude of his intentions, did continue the sale of the said alleged Libel, thinking that the oath of a common informer was not sufficient authority to induce your Petitioner to put the construction of an impious and profane Libel on

the said publication, and intended to have continued the sale of the said publication until your Petitioner should have had an opportunity of submitting the said publication and his intentions in publishing it, to a jury of his fellow-citizens.

“That your Petitioner, to his great surprize and injury, was again arrested on the eleventh day of February in the present year aforesaid, on a warrant issued by the Lord Chief Justice Abbott, which warrant amongst other things sets forth “on the affidavit of George Prichard and Thomas Fair,” that your Petitioner had ben proceeded against by an indictment for the said publication, and that your Petitioner had entered into recognizances to plead to the said indictment, but that since your Petitioner had entered into the said recognizances, your Petitioner “had sold another copy of the said Libel, for which last mentioned offence the said George Prichard *intends* to prosecute.” That your Petitioner was brought before Mr. Justice Holroyd, at his chambers in Serjeant’s Inn, Chancery Lane, and by him committed on the said eleventh day of February, to his Majesty’s goal of Newgate.

“And your Petitioner further prayeth, that your Honourable House will of its wisdom take into consideration the necessity of repealing the said grievous and oppressive law, which by its provisions, enables the common informer or perjured villain, with the aid of a partial judge, to harrass and injure his Majesty’s unoffending subjects.

“And as in duty bound, your Petitioner will ever pray, &c.

“RICHARD CARLILE.”

On the 23d February the Publisher addressed the following Letter and Petition to the Attorney-General and received the following Answer.

SIR,

Fleet Street, February 23rd, 1819.

I BEG leave to lay before you a Petition, to the Honourable the House of Commons, with a request that you will be pleased to present it.

It has occurred to me, that no other Member of the Honourable House is so well qualified to judge of and support its prayer, as his Majesty’s Attorney-General.

Your condescension to the above request will oblige.

Sir, your humble servant,

R. CARLILE.

“To Sir Sammel Shepherd, Knight,
His Majesty’s Attorney-General.”

“TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND, IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

“*The PETITION of RICHARD CARLILE, of Fleet Street, in the City of London, Bookseller,*

HUMBLY SHEWETH,

“That your Petitioner being anxious to see restored to its original purity, that invaluable right and privilege, the Trial by Jury; as well for his own personal safety, as for the honour of his country; humbly prayeth the at-

tention of your Honourable House, to that part of the Jury List belonging to the City of London, whence the Jurors denominated Special Jurors are chosen.

"That it appears to your Petitioner, who presumes, it could also be made apparent to your Honourable House, that instead of the Merchants of the City of London being called on, to serve as Special Jurors, according to the statute in that case made and provided, many persons, who are not *bona fide* Merchants of the City of London, but who, by some undue influence, have got their names inserted on the Jury List as merchants of the City of London, have, for a considerable time, to the great scandal of our Courts of Justice, made a traffic of serving as Jurors, for the consideration of the sum of one guinea, which is paid to a Special Juror for each case on which he is called to decide.

"That, it appears to your Petitioner, according to a report laid before the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commonality of the City of London, in Common Council assembled, on the eleventh day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventeen, that one person decided no less than fifty-five cases, out of one hundred and fourteen, which were decided in the City of London, during the sittings after the several Terms of Hilary, Easter, and Trinity of the year aforesaid.

"That it appears to your Petitioner, that although a new List of Jurors, has of late been presented to the Master of the Crown Office by the Sheriff or Deputy of the City of London, it is not a full and proper list of the merchants of the City of London, a great portion of their names bearing only the *initial* of the Christian name, which renders any attempt to summon such persons abortive.

"That it appears to your Petitioner, that the intent of the statute, which provides, that, all cases of Libel and other difficult cases may be decided by a Special Jury, (meaning thereby, from the situation in life, of such persons as are qualified for Special Jurors) that, such Juries would be more likely to combine the necessary information and talent required to decide on difficult or abstruse questions, and the true meaning of such statute could be no otherwise, than, that such Juries should be considered to possess Special abilities, applicable to such questions as they may severally be called on to decide.

"And your Petitioner, further prayeth, that when your Honourable House shall have taken the above premises into consideration; your Honourable House will in its wisdom think fit to order the returns of the names and residences, in full, of all the merchants in the City of London, qualified to serve as Special Jurors, according to the statute, in that case made and provided; and, also, to order such lists as have of late been used for the nomination of Special Jurors, to be laid before your Honourable House, that your Honourable House may become acquainted with the gross perversion of the statute in that case made and provided.

"And further prayeth; that your Honourable House will in its wisdom, take such steps, as shall in future rescue our Courts of Justice from this disgrace, and secure to the subject the benefit of the Trial by Jury in its original purity.

"And as in duty bound, your Petitioner will ever pray, &c.

"R. CARLILE."

"SIR,

Spring Gardens, February 24, 1819.

"I HAVE received your note dated the 25th, February, 1819 accompanied by a Petition addressed to the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled, signed R. Carlile, and I beg to inform you that I decline presenting the Petition to the House, and have therefore returned it to you.

"I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

"S. SHEPHERD."

"Mr. Carlile."

The Petition was then presented to Mr. Alderman Waithman, with copies of the forgoing letters, requesting him to present it; but he made an excuse, by saying, that, it had better not be presented, as the subject matter was before the Common Council of the City of London and that it would be shortly decided. That short time does not appear to have arrived yet although three years have nearly elapsed, and near five from the time of Mr. Pearson's introducing the matter and getting it referred to a Committee! Quere. Are these Committees paid for their particular business?

On the 28th April, being the first day of Easter Term, the Publisher appeared and pleaded to the Information and Indictment to which he had imparled in the former term, and found another information, on the No. 6, vol 4, of Sherwin's Political Register, which had been kept out of sight until this time; although it was purchased for prosecution prior to the first publication of Paine's Theological Works. There was also a second Indictment on the part of the Vice Society, against the "Theological Works of Thomas Paine," and a third against Elihu Palmer's "Principles of Nature," to which the Publisher's Letter to the Hypocrites called attention. To the three last, the Publisher again imparled. On leaving the Court no further bail having been moved for, which, it appeared, arose from the neglect of Mr. Marriot, the Junior Counsel to the Essex Street Gang, and a man who on the score of hypocrisy seems well adapted for them, Messrs. Prichard and Jones the Agents for the Gang ran out after the Publisher, and begged him to give notice of bail, that it might be taken at the Judge's Chambers. This was done accordingly, and a circumstance which occurred at the Chambers is worthy of record. Mr. Justice Best was sitting, and a similar attempt was made on the part of the Prosecutors to demand heavy bail, as was made before Judge Bailey, but resisted by the Judge in a similar manner. The recognizances having been taken, Mr. Jones the Clerk in the Crown Office, demanded of the Publisher half a guinea as a fee; he was answered, good humouredly, that he must look to the Society for whom he acted, for all his fees. To this he angrily replied, that the fee was not his, but the Judge's Clerk's, and that if it was not paid the recognizances would not be valid. The Publisher not being dupe enough for this pick-pocket, told him that he had no money for any such purpose. The Judge's Clerk was appealed

to, who insisted on payment, in the same authoritative manner, and was answered with the same indifference. "Well then," says he, "we will lay the matter before Mr. Justice Best, and have his authority for it." "I will wait for you," says the Publisher, "but you will have none of my money for any such purpose." In they went to the adjoining Chamber, where the Judge was sitting and after a conference of fifteen or twenty minutes, came out quite mild and very civilly informed the Publisher that Mr. Justice Best said if Mr. Carlile had no money he could not pay the fee: which was just the same as saying: the fee is an imposition and robbery, and none but easy dupes would pay it: although it is well known to be a compounded matter between the Judge and his Clerk, and that all these offices from the Lord Chancellor and Chief Justices down to the lowest of their Clerks are farmed out at a rent just like a house or estate; only in these cases the suitors at law have to pay the exactions. If you employ a Lawyer he makes it a point of honour to pay all these fees, and a pretty list of them he will exhibit to you in his bill. It is a robbery, and the writer of this will never pay another fee in any case where he is the defendant. He has successfully resisted them all, and has paid none save in a few instances where he employed an Attorney, who made it a point of honour to pay them, and of course out of the pocket of his client. Beware of Lawyers. They are quite unnecessary in cases of Libel for the Defendant. Murray and Sharpe for the Bridge Street Gang pay all the fees both for the prosecutors, and defendants. They are very liberal with the funds of their Association in that way.

Trinity Term came, when the Publisher appeared in Court and attempted further to postpone his plea upon the three last prosecutions, upon the strength of three affidavits, which set forth that the Vice Society's prosecutions were multiplied for the malignant purpose of embarrassing him in his defence.

Mr. Justice Best called this very rash swearing, to say the least of it. Gurney the Counsel got up and nodded assent, and said it was merely making the Court a medium to defame this very respectable society. Defendant told him to sit down, and asked him what business it was of his, when it came out that he was to be the Counsel for the Society. This very man who had promised to defend the third part of the "Age of Reason" gratuitously, if ever it should be prosecuted, even before it was printed in this country! This man who rose at the bar entirely from defending the publications of Daniel Isaac Eaton, who may be said to have been the predecessor of the present Publisher of Paine's Works. The Publisher knows nothing of the private character of Gurney, but if personal representations and anonymous letters were of any weight, he could write a pretty history or memoir of him. This is known, he is a great hypocrite as a public character, and from a late trial at the Surrey Assizes, it appears, to be a family complaint, which breaks through

the surplice and cassock as well as through the gown and wig. A Family that will say, preach, or swear any thing for gain.

The Defendant's attempt to imparle further was resisted by the Court, and he pleaded Not Guilty to all, being now three Indictments and two Informations, besides four other Informations, which were hanging over his head, and which altogether, at the time of the Mock Trials, were understood to have been increased to more than a dozen. When the enemy is defeated they shall be all gathered into a volume.

The Attorney-General Shepherd was evidently reluctant to bring his Information to a trial, as it might have been done in the sittings after Easter Term. However, he delayed it until he could shift the odium upon Gifford by getting a start in office, which was done in August. The Defendant stood ready for trial as soon as he had pleaded to the first Information and Indictment and took the precaution to subpœna the Archbishop of Canterbury at an early period. The Archbishop was so far surprized at the subpœna as not to notice that a guinea was left with it, but politely returned it the following day, by his Secretary, saying, that its being left was overlooked for the moment, and that it was not a necessary accompaniment with the subpœna in this case.

In September the note of preparation for the trials was heard on the part of the Persecutors, and the following Correspondence took place.

" SIR,

Lincoln's Inn, September 2, 1819.

" WE are directed by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, to acquaint you, that His Grace will be in Nottinghamshire in the month of October, and that if you should require his attendance upon your trial according to the subpœna with which he has been served, you must take the trouble to enquire at Lambeth Palace, about a week previous to the day appointed, where you will obtain His Grace's exact address; and upon notice being then sent his Grace, and suitable arrangements made, His Grace will not fail to attend.

" His Grace concludes that you will be aware of the great inconvenience he must be subjected to by such a journey, and that you will not require his attendance unless it be very material.

" We are, Sir, your obedient Servants,

" FORSTER, COOKE, and FRERE.

" Mr. Carlile.

" MY LORD,

Fleet Street, September 4, 1819.

" I FEEL it my duty to express the warm approbation I felt on receiving the candid information from Messrs. Forster, Cooke, and Frere, where your Grace may be found in the month of October, should the presence of your Grace be required on my trial.

"I beg to assure your Grace, that my motive in serving you with a subpoena was neither idle nor frivolous, and shall deem the presence of your Grace to be of the highest importance, not only to my interest as an individual, but to the interest of Truth and Justice, and, consequently, the interest of mankind in general.

"In conjunction with your Grace, it is my intention to serve with a subpoena, the persons in this country most eminent in theology, astronomy, and Oriental literature.

"I further beg leave to assure your Grace, that such questions for such evidence as I may find necessary to elicit, shall be put by me with a due impression of the importance and rank of those to whom I shall be addressing myself.

"I beg leave to subscribe myself,

"Your Grace's most obliged and obedient Servant,

"RICHARD CARLILE."

"To his Grace

The Archbishop of Canterbury."

"SIR,

Fleet Street, September 6, 1819.

"As the adjourned sittings in the Court of King's Bench are near at hand, I beg leave to inquire, whether it is your intention, as His Majesty's Attorney-General, to prosecute in the ensuing sittings in the month of October, those Informations filed against me by His Majesty's late Attorney-General, Sir Samuel Shepherd, and should it be your intention to proceed, which of them you will be pleased to take first.

"Flattering myself that I shall find in you, Sir, a generous opponent, I would entreat the earliest notice of trial that might possible be given, as it is my intention to serve with subpoenas several persons of rank and distinction, eminent in the theological, scientific, and literary world, for whose convenience and accommodation I am solicitous to obtain the earliest notice, as many of them are resident in distant parts of the country, and would wish, at least, a week's notice for attendance.

"I am, Sir, your most obliged and obedient Servant,

"RICHARD CARLILE."

"Sir Robert Gifford, Knt.

His Majesty's Attorney-General."

"SIR,

"In answer to your inquiry, I have to state, that it is certainly my intention that the Informations against you which stand for trial at the adjourned sittings in October should be tried at those sittings; and that the Information against you for publishing a blasphemous libel, which stands prior in order to others on the list of cases, will first come on for trial.

"I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

"R. GIFFORD."

"Lincoln's Inn,
September 7, 1819."

"SIR,

Lincoln's Inn, October 4, 1819.

"I BEG leave to acquaint you, that Tuesday, the 12th inst, has been appointed for the trial of the Informations filed against you by His Majesty's Attorney General, and that it is proposed to commence with the Information for Paine's "Age of Reason."

"I am, Sir, your obedient humble Servant,

"GEO. MAULE."

"Mr. Carlile,
55, Fleet Street."

"MY LORD,

London, October 5, 1819.

"I BEG leave to inform your Grace, that Tuesday, the 12th October, is fixed for the trial of the Information on which your Grace has received a subpoena.

"I shall take the earliest opportunity of moving the Court to make some arrangement for the accommodation of your Grace, and other personages, whom I shall subpoena, so as to prevent any unnecessary delay or attendance, as my defence will occupy many days.

"I am, my Lord your Grace's humble Servant,

"RICHARD CARLILE."

"To His Grace
The Archbishop of Canterbury."

"MY LORD,

London, October 5th, 1819.

"I BEG leave most respectfully to tender your Grace a subpoena, requiring the presence of your Grace on my approaching trial.

"I am sensible that to enclose a subpoena in a letter is not a legal service, but have done it under the idea, that it would be more agreeable to your Grace than a personal intrusion.

"I rely on the honour of your Grace for your presence agreeable to the subpoena.

"I am, my Lord your Grace's humble Servant,

"RICHARD CARLILE."

"To His Grace
The Archbishop of York."

"SIR,

London, October 5th, 1819.

"I BEG leave to tender you a subpoena, requiring your presence on my trial, about to commence on the 12th inst., but not likely to terminate within 10 days.

"I am aware that this is not a legal service, but I rely on your honour, if possible for you to be in London in time.

"I flatter myself that the interest of humanity and mankind, which you display so much ardour to promote, are closely connected with the result of my trial, your answer to this will oblige,

"Sir, your humble Servant,

"RICHARD CARLILE."

"Robert Owen Esq.,
New Lanark."

" SIR,

New Lanark, October 8, 1819.

" I THIS morning received your letter of the 5th inst., inclosing a subpoena to attend your trial on the 14th of this month. Unknown to you and unacquainted as I am with a single fact respecting your case, it does not appear to me that my attendance can be of the least use on the trial.

" Notwithstanding these impressions I would obey the call of any fellow creature who imagined that my attendance would aid the cause of justice, or in any degree tend to join freedom of thought and expression to mankind, because both these are necessary to make men good, wise, and happy; but I could not at present leave this place without causing an essential injury to the great object in which I am deeply engaged, for which the existence and well being of millions depend. For a short time I must still continue to neglect the few for the many, *that all* may derive permanent benefit.

" Under these circumstances, I trust my attendance may be excused.

" I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

" R. OWEN."

In addition, subpoenas were served on Mr. Pond the Astronomer Royal, Mr. Solomon Herschel the High Priest of the Jews, and some of the leading men in different sects of Christians, who cavil most about doctrines and tenets, all of whom attended in the most handsome manner, and the Chief Justice, best knows why he was afraid to have them examined and brought together. However, the Publisher can do no less than here publicly return these Gentlemen his thanks for their attendance in Court, and congratulates them upon the tolerant disposition they uniformly expressed to the Defendant, and their abhorrence of his persecution.

The only exception, and that an infamous one, was the conduct of Mr John Bellamy, the new translator of the Bible, by a perfectly new species of translating the Hebrew Language in which obscenity is changed into morality, vice into virtue, and the most consummate villainy into an uprightness and meekness of manners. Mr. John Bellamy personally promised the Defendant, and some of his friends, that whenever the trial took place, he would come into Court and be examined upon the contents of the Bible, and admit that upon the present authorized translation the objections of the Deists were valid, and that it was not a proper translation of the original Hebrew. But when the time of trial drew near, Mr. B. was denied to all enquiry, and it was said that he had retired into the country, if so, undoubtedly for the purpose of evading a subpoena. Let him reconcile his performance with his promise if he can. He has given the writer of this a pretty good proof that his pretended sincerity about the Bible is a mere piece of trading hypocrisy, a mere money speculation upon the production of a novelty. How ever he deserves thanks for his Anti-Deist, as far as the Publisher and his principles are concerned, as its contemptibility threw a splendour upon the work it reviewed, and, doubtless, much increased its sale: every adver-

tisement of the former, forming a joint advertisement for the latter, as no purchaser of the one could be content without the other, and instead of refuting it strengthened.

The contrast between Mr. Bellamy and Dr. George Somers Clarke, Vicar of Waltham, in Essex, is great. The latter, a celebrated Hebrew Scholar, and a deep student in polemical theology, came forward as a volunteer, to shew from the original Hebrew and Greek, as well as from the translation, that not one argument of Paine's upon the Old and New Testament could be controverted. He was present in Court with his parchment rolls, his Arabic, his Hebrew, and his Greek volumes, and was well known to Chief Justice Abbott, having instructed him at College, and who asserts, that the Chief Justice was peculiarly attached to Atheistical subjects, and to the translating and imitating of Lucretius.

This completes a narrative of what occurred up to the time of the Mock Trials, and a few observations on the Proceedings will fall in better at the close of the Report, than in this Introduction.

The Publisher presents it to the public, with a conviction, that it contains nothing that throws the least disgrace upon him, but much that disgraces others. In the last year of the present period allotted him for imprisonment, he feels a pride in his whole career, and is bent on a perseverance in a similar course. If his enemies dare to prosecute again for the same thing, he has not the least fear again to tread the boards of the Court of King's Bench. He is now in just the same disposition as when he first published the "Theological Works of Thomas Paine," and, as then, he will again persevere in publishing. He knows that they will ultimately triumph over all opposition and nothing shall be wanting on his part to accelerate that triumph. The potency of the British Legislature is not equal to keeping the works of Thomas Paine from the examination of an intelligent and enquiring people.

Dorchester Goal, December 27th, 1821.

POSTSCRIPT.

SINCE writing the foregoing the Publisher feels bound to notice here, the repeated robbery that has been practised upon him under the pretence of securing his fines of £1500. On the day of receiving the sentence of the Court of King's Bench, his premises in Fleet Street were entered, and their contents taken in requisition to meet the fines levied upon him: after keeping the shop shut up six weeks, the Robbers moved away all they could, and all that was not bought of them, to let it rot in some cellar. The number of publications of all prices, from half-a-guinea downward, that were taken away amounted very near to seventy thousand, and if they had been sold upon the premises would have covered the whole amount of both fines. The Robbers spared nothing, not even waste paper and an old sofa bedstead, that could be only got out of the house through the window, they left nothing behind them but dirt, and a never dying hatred of Monarchical and Christian Robbers.

After repeated threats to enter again and finally stop the business, it was put in execution on the 5th February 1822, giving the whole people of this Island a convincing proof that nothing but violence and plunder can support the Christian Religion and Monarchical Despotism.

The Publisher is assured that the loss to him by such robberies and interruptions of his business is estimated at a low rate in five thousand pounds. He would have paid his fines without a murmur if he had been left to pay them in the usual way, at the expiration of his imprisonment, and without the aid of a subscription. The worst part of the business is, that the property so taken from him accounts for nothing, and is not exposed for sale: evincing, that the object is not only plunder, but a destruction of what to him would be a property as good as specie.

He has now no alternative but to look to the public for the payments of his fines, or to friends for loans for that object. It is a public cause. As an individual he has no wants, and in the cause nearest his heart he will do all that ever lays in his power to do. Those who approve his conduct and career, may enable him to do as much more as they please.

The amount of Subscriptions received to the end of March 1822, is within five hundred pounds, and very near that sum.

March 20, 1822.

THE
PROCEEDINGS
ON
THE MOCK TRIAL,
&c. &c.

FIRST DAY.—OCTOBER 12TH.

THE first of the several informations which have stood in the paper for nearly a twelvemonth against the defendant, came on for trial this day. Soon after nine o'clock, Mr. CARLILE, accompanied by several friends, entered the Court by the side door, and placed upon the table several books, from which he intended to make extracts as necessary to his defence.

Mr. *Carlile* immediately addressed Mr. Sheriff Parkins, and said that several of his friends, who carried with them books necessary to his defence, were excluded. Mr. Parkins requested a list of their names, and upon receiving it, desired that they should be admitted:—

At twenty-five minutes after nine, the Attorney-General, the Solicitor General, Mr. Gurney, Mr. Littledale, and Mr. Campbell, the Counsel for the Crown, arrived, and took their seats.

Mr. *Carlile* made another appeal to Mr. Sheriff Parkins, and stated that his friends were not admitted.

Mr. Sheriff *Parkins* addressed Mr. Collinridge, and desired that his orders should be attended to.

Mr. *Collinridge*.—Mr. Carlile has already five friends in Court.

Mr. Sheriff *Parkins*.—I suppose, Mr. Carlile, those persons are necessary to your defence?

Mr. *Carlile*.—They are laden with books, to which I shall have occasion to refer.

Mr. Sheriff *Parkins*.—They must be admitted.

The names of four persons were then given in, and they

were ordered to be admitted. At half past nine, the Chief Justice took his seat. The cause of "The King against Carlile," was then called on.

Mr. *Carlile*.—I wish an order from your Lordship that several persons who are laden with my books be admitted, before I can proceed.

The *Chief Justice*.—I can make no arrangement with regard to them. If you wish your books should be brought in, a few friends, and your solicitor, will also be allowed, but if your object be to be surrounded by a number of friends, it is inadmissible, your books might be handed in by any officer present.

Mr. *Carlile*.—It is impossible, my Lord, that I can allow them to get into the hands of an indifferent person. I am not anxious that my friends should surround me, but that they should be admitted with the books.—The books were then brought in with the exception of two parcels, which were missing until the afternoon.

The list of Special Jurymen was now called over, and as Mr. Charles Wood, Abchurch-lane, answered to his name;

Mr. *Carlile* said, Before the Jury are sworn, I beg leave to submit that this Court is not competent to try the charge against me.

The *Chief Justice*.—The Court is competent to try any criminal information filed by the Attorney-General.

Mr. *Carlile*.—I submit there is no law which applies to this case.

The *Chief Justice*.—If there is no such law, you will be acquitted.

Mr. *Carlile*.—I protest against the proceedings.

The *Chief Justice*.—You protest. Very well.

The following names were then called over, and the parties answered to their names.

Charles Wood, Abchurch-lane.

Robert Hutchinson, Clements-lane.

John Hanson, Crooked-lane.

George Harvey, Laurence-lane.

Arthur Chichester Allen, Ironmonger-lane.

John Wilson, Queen-street.

Richard Chambers, Dove-court.

William Parker, John-street.

The *Attorney-General* prayed a tales.

Mr. *Carlile*.—I have had no copy of the talesmen, I should wish for one.

Mr. *Collinridge*.—I believe I have one, and you shall

have it. (A list was handed to Mr. Carlile.) Mr. Bellamy then took out the names from the box in which they were placed, and Mr. Carlile begged of him to shake them up.

The *Chief Justice*.—Sir, the usual order will be attended to, but at least shake them well, if that be necessary.—Mr. Bellamy having first taken out the name of Mr. Robert Plant, haberdasher, said he might withdraw, and then shook up the names of the talesmen.

The *Attorney-General*.—No; let Mr. Plant be sworn.

The following talesmen were then called.—

Robert Plant, Haberdasher, Portsoken Ward.

George Coutts, Baker, Farringdon Ward Within.

John Triggey, Chair-maker, Farringdon Ward Within.

Matthew Hollyer, Glazier, of Farringdon Ward Within.

They having answered to their names, and the whole being sworn, Mr. Campbell stated the pleadings.

Mr. *Carlile*.—I request that the information be read at the proper time.

The *Chief Justice*.—You must not interrupt the proceedings of the Court. This case shall be tried in a similar manner with all others.

Mr. *Carlile*.—I only requested that the information might be read, in order that the Jury might understand the question which they were about to try; it is essential it should be read at length.

The *Chief Justice*.—The information shall be read at the proper season.

Mr. *Carlile*.—That is all I desire.

The *Attorney-General* now rose and spoke to the following effect:—

My Lord and Gentlemen of the Jury—I feel considerable satisfaction in the reflection that on this occasion, I shall not have to encounter those prejudices which are sometimes very naturally excited in the minds of Englishmen, from a jealousy of all interference with the liberty of the Press, or freedom of discussion, especially on proceedings similar to the present. Gentlemen, I am confident if you are not already apprized of the charge, (as possibly some of you may not be) from the short manner in which it has been the duty of my Learned Friend to introduce it to you, I am sure when I shall shortly and plainly state it, accompanied with a few observations which my duty calls upon me to make; and, Gentlemen, when these are made, when these are heard by you, I am satisfied the warmest friend to the liberty of the press, the most strenuous advocates for

the widest latitude of discussion that could be enjoyed in this free country, even the most unreasonable man in the community, will not find this prosecution has any intention to restrict that liberty. But, Gentlemen, I should have been guilty of a dereliction of my duty, if I had abstained from bringing this before your notice and that of the country. If the Defendant wishes to enlarge upon it, he will have the right, but I shall not detain you with any recital beyond that which is necessary to enable you to comprehend the charge. I shall also offer to you evidence of the publication of the Defendant, and you will no doubt come to a fair and unbiassed decision. It has long been the boast of the people of this country, (and I trust it will ever be) that they have lived under a religion, which having for its origin the Deity, who has heaped his favours on mankind, is at once the most benign and good which can bless the human race. The Christian religion so long established in the country, is a part of the law of the land, and when the present defendant contends that the charge against him is founded on no law, he labours under as great a mistake as has ever befallen man. Fortunate it would be for him that no such law existed, for in that case only might he hope for an acquittal; this must be his only reliance, for in no other case can he hope the verdict of a Jury will be favourable to him. But I fearlessly state to the Jury, confident that my statement will be confirmed by that authority to which all must bow, the learned Judge before whom the question is to be tried—that there is not the slightest ground for the assertion of the Defendant, that the present charge is founded in no law. Similar proceedings have often before been instituted, nor is there the smallest pretension for saying, that they were not supported on the clearest principles of law. It would be idle for me, after the oaths you have taken, to declaim on the excellency and benignity of that religion which we profess, and which forms a part of the constitution of this country. It would be idle for me to address men, who have sworn on that book, and thereby pledged themselves to the sanctity of that religion on which alone these proceedings can rest. You, by your oaths, have pledged yourselves to believe in its sanctity, to its being the revealed word of God, and from that belief I must expect your verdict in this cause. Indeed, I should give up in effect the Christian religion altogether, and give it up as not forming a part of the constitution of the country, if I allowed its merits to be discussed. I shall therefore abstain in the outset from offering any such re-

marks, and I shall leave it to your own breasts, as Christians, citizens, fathers, and husbands, to determine whether that holy religion be only a fable and an imposture, that religion, on which all our civil and religious institutions have been founded.

Christianity is, undoubtedly, a part of the common law of the land, and therefore a part of the constitution of the country; that it is so, cannot be disproved, and it has always been considered as a crime to revile that religion, on which the proper administration of public justice depends, and only under the sanction of which you are this day assembled to decide the question to be brought before you. If you did not believe in this, why did you come here? If you are not satisfied of this, why pledge yourselves by taking the oath tendered to you—by your hopes of happiness here and hereafter, to give an impartial verdict? Unless the defendant can wipe away such a part of the Christian religion as that which forms your oath—unless, I may almost say, he can persuade you to be purged from that solemn obligation—unless he can make you perjure yourselves—unless he is able to effect all this, it is impossible for him to be acquitted. If it is, then, an offence to revile the Christian religion, the religion of the State, as it has been held to be through many succeeding ages, when I shall come to those disgusting passages in the publication of the defendant, which it will shortly be my duty to read to you, Gentlemen of the Jury, I am sure I may sit down content alone with their bare perusal—and satisfied, that no man, whether a Christian or not, whatever may be his religious tenets, whatever his political creed—that no man, while Christianity continues a part of the law of the land, will be permitted to defame and to revile it as the Defendant has done; and that no man will be found to say he has not violated the law in the publication now charged against him. Gentlemen, you are not to take the law from me, but in what I say I am sure of being confirmed by his Lordship, when he comes to address you at the proper season—that to revile, with a view to bring into contempt the Christian religion, is contrary to the common law of the land. I say, also, that it is a statutable offence, if it is necessary to refer to them on the present occasion. Now, I shall find no more difficulty in shewing that to be the case, than that the publication now charged against the Defendant is a criminal offence, for which the party committing it is liable to be punished. The first case to which I shall call the attention of

the Court occurred so long ago as the time of King Charles II. It was tried before a Judge, who, as long as British law shall endure, will be held in the highest estimation as a lawyer and as a man. I mean Sir Matthew Hale. It was an information against a person of the name of Taylor, for merely uttering blasphemous expressions. I will not disgust the Jury by repeating the whole of the words he uttered, as they are horrible to hear, though not worse than those which it will be my duty to prove have been published by the present Defendant. Taylor, it was proved, had called religion a cheat, and declared that he feared neither God nor Devil. Being on his trial, he owned the words, but endeavoured to shew that part of them had been uttered with a meaning different from that which had been supposed to attach to them. The Judge, however, decided, that to say religion was a cheat, was not only an offence against religion, but a subversion of all law, as it went to dissolve all those obligations which held society together. This was the decision of Sir Matthew Hale; yet now we are told by the present Defendant, that the charge brought against him has no foundation in law. I may now say, in the language of the learned Judge I have just mentioned, that to revile the Christian religion "was not only an offence against God, but also against the law of the State, and the Government of the realm." Christianity is part and parcel of the law. Taylor was convicted, and a very severe sentence was given against him. But the precedents that might be adduced did not stop at the period to which I have gone back. At the commencement of the reign of George II. a person of the name of Woolston was convicted on four informations. He attempted to justify himself, by impugning, as he had previously done, the miracles of our Saviour, and the belief which all Christians profess. But this mode of defence the Court would not suffer him to proceed with, and without wishing to interfere with the discussions of learned men on particular points, they held it was forbidden to make a general attack on the Christian religion, while to call religion a cheat was an offence cognizable by a civil Court. In this case also conviction took place, and a sentence commensurate with his crime was given against the defendant. I may refer to what has been done at a later period, when Williams had the temerity to send forth the same infamous and blasphemous publication which is the subject of the present prosecution. On that occasion, the defendant was prosecuted by an advocate who had ever been distin-

guished among the friends of free discussion and the liberty of the press—the present Lord Erskine. He, though he adhered to all he had ever uttered in defence of those inestimable blessings, had contended that punishment was called for in a case where it was attempted to undermine those religious principles on which the present comfort of mankind, and their hopes of eternal happiness were founded: not to undermine them in the minds of thinking men, but in the minds of those who have perhaps neither capacity nor leisure to enter into an investigation of their origin and effects, but for whose especial comfort and welfare, religious principles are so necessary, I mean the lower orders of the people. On that occasion, the defendant was convicted, after an attempt to do that which I hope will not be attempted this day, to defend the publication. In 1812, a person of the name of Eaton sent forth the very same book. He was tried before the predecessor of the present Chief Justice; but was it held by the learned persons engaged on that occasion, that to revile the Christian religion was not contrary to the law of the land? No such a doctrine has ever obtained there; and three successive juries and successive courts, have found successive defendants guilty of a serious offence against the laws of their country, and this was so decided at a period when every thing connected with the liberty of the press and freedom of discussion was most likely to be fully inquired into, and sifted to the bottom. Having stated this, I am content to leave it to the Court and Jury to say, whether or not such conduct at the present day ought not to be viewed as an infraction of the law of the land. If it be admitted that the Christian religion is a part of the law of the land, it remains to be shewn, whether or not the defendant has violated that law, by publishing one of the most abominable, disgusting, and wicked attacks on religion and its author, that has ever appeared in the world. The first attack is made on the Old Testament, as the writer knew that throwing discredit on that, was the readiest way to bring the New Testament into discredit.

Gentlemen, I must read to you several passages from this abominable production, however shocking to our feelings it may be to do so. I feel myself under the painful necessity of offending you and the Court and every moral man who hears me, by a recital of those disgusting passages, on the tendency of which, it will shortly become your duty to decide. Gentlemen, this writer commences his attack upon the foundation of our holy religion, vainly imagining if he

succeeded in his object, that the superstructure built upon it would fall. Gentlemen, the first passage to which I invite your attention is this:—

“Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than one half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a demon, than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind.”

I wish to put it to you, Gentlemen of the Jury, as fathers of families, anxious to teach your children to fear God, and hope for that eternal happiness so gloriously displayed by our holy religion, what your feelings would be, if you found such a paper had been put into the hands of your offspring and domestics? But if you wanted a key to the mind of the author, you will find it in the following passage:—

“Did the book called the Bible (for such is the contemptuous manner in which the author speaks of that sacred work) excel in purity of ideas and expression, all the books that are now extant in the world, I would not take it for my rule of faith as being the word of God, because—(because what?)—the possibility would, nevertheless, exist, of my being imposed upon; but when I see, throughout the greatest part of this book, scarcely any thing but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales, I cannot dishonour my Creator by calling it by his name.”

So that the writer would reject the purest system of religion, because there might be a possibility of being imposed upon. The publication goes on to say:—

“To charge the commission of acts upon the Almighty, which, in their own nature, and by every rule of moral justice, are crimes, as all assassination is, and more especially the assassination of infants, is matter of serious concern. The Bible tells us that those assassinations were done by the express command of God—to believe, therefore, the Bible to be true, we must unbelieve all our belief in the moral justice of God; for wherein could crying or smiling infants offend? And to read the Bible without horror, we must undo every thing that is tender, sympathizing, and benevolent in the heart of man. Speaking for myself, if I had no other evidence that the Bible is fabulous than the sacrifice I must make to believe it to be true, that alone would be sufficient to determine my choice.”

Gentlemen, there are many other passages relating to the Old Testament, the essence of which may be summed up in a single line, in which the author declares:—

“It is a book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy.”

Such is the conclusion, Gentlemen of the Jury, to which the author of these paragraphs has arrived. All this must be shocking to you, and I know you feel it. I cannot but anticipate its effect upon you, and I wish consistently with my duty, that I could close these disgusting extracts, and abstain from the still more shocking blasphemies which the work contains against the New Testament and the name of our divine and blessed Saviour. Indeed, Gentlemen, I can assure you without the least affectation, that I feel the utmost pain in proceeding to this part of my painful duty. It is painful in the extreme, to me and to you. The indecent and blasphemous levity, with which the author treats the subject, shocks and must shock every man of feeling, or of religious habits; but still I am compelled to call your attention to the following passage:—

“As it is nothing extraordinary that a woman should be with child before she was married, and that the son she might bring forth should be executed, even unjustly, I see no reason for not believing that such a woman as Mary, and such men as Joseph and Jesus existed; their mere existence is a matter of indifference, about which there is no ground either to believe or disbelieve, and which comes under the common head of, It may be so, and what then? The probability, however, is, that there were such persons, or at least such as resembled them in part of the circumstances, because almost all romantic stories have been suggested by some actual circumstances, as the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, not a word of which is true, were suggested by the case of Alexander Selkirk. It is not then the existence or non-existence of the persons that I trouble myself about. It is the fable of Jesus Christ, as told in the New Testament, and the wild and visionary doctrine raised thereon, against which I contend. The story, taken it as it is told, is blasphemously obscene; it gives an account of a young woman engaged to be married, and while under this engagement she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost, under the impious pretence (Luke, chap. i. ver. 35,) that ‘the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.’”

Are we living in a Christian age? Do we profess a religion at all? Surely it might have been expected that the most sceptical person, that the greatest infidel, would pause before he wrote such a paragraph. “If it were possible,” he says—why then he admits it to be possible—I will use his own argument against him. The defendant and the writer of these passages ought to have paused. When those shall occur to him, in his last moments—and reflection will then come—I will ask, with what feelings will he reflect on

the bare possibility that that which he has so arraigned may be founded in truth? I believe in my conscience, that Paine himself and the present defendant, in their calmer moments, could not but have some little doubt on the subject. What, then, must be the feelings of the defendant at the close of his life, when he remembers that he has been the means of putting such publications into the hands of the young and the inexperienced, to dishonour that Deity whom we all profess to worship, and to whom we owe the manifold blessings we enjoy?

The next passage to which I beg your attention, is not less blasphemous than those I have already quoted—it is thus:—

“I have now gone through the examination of the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and when it is considered that the whole space of time, from the crucifixion to what is called the ascension, is but a few days, apparently not more than three or four, and that all the circumstances are reported to have happened nearly about the same spot, Jerusalem, it is, I believe, impossible to find in any story upon record, so many and such glaring absurdities, contradictions, and falsehoods, as are in those books. But the case is, that people have been so long in the habit of reading the books called the Bible and Testament with their eyes shut, and their senses locked up, that the most stupid inconsistencies have passed on them for truth, and imposition for prophesy. The all-wise Creator hath been dishonoured by being made the author of fable, and the human mind degraded by believing it. I forbear (continues the author) making any remark on this abominable imposition of Matthew, the thing glaringly speaks for itself; it is priests and commentators that I rather ought to censure for having preached falsehoods so long, and kept people in darkness, with respect to those impositions. I am not contending with these men upon points of doctrine, for I know that sophistry has always a city of refuge; I am speaking of facts; for wherever the thing called a fact is a falsehood, the faith founded upon it is delusion, and the doctrine raised upon it not true. Ah! reader, put thy trust in thy Creator, and thou wilt be safe, but if thou trustest to the book called the Scripture, thou trustest to the rotten staff of fable and falsehood. I have now, reader, gone through and examined all the passages which the four books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, quote from the Old Testament, and call them prophecies of Jesus Christ. When first I sat down to this examination, I expected to find cause for some censure, but little did I expect to find them so utterly destitute of truth and of all pretensions to it, as I have shewn them to be; the practice which the writers of those books employ, is not more false than it is absurd; they state some trifling case of the person they call Jesus Christ, and then cut out a sentence from some passage

of the Old Testament and call it a prophecy of that case. But when the words thus cut out are restored to the place they are taken from, and read with the words before and after them, they give the lie to the New Testament."

One would suppose that some little decorum, some little decency would be observed in the discussion of so sacred a subject—but no, the whole is treated as an imposture, a lie, and a fable. I do not think there is a man existing who will not say that this is a direct attack, couched in the coarsest terms, on the Holy Scriptures and the religion which is professed in this country. The libel goes on thus:—

"These repeated forgeries and falsifications create a well-founded suspicion, that all the cases spoken of concerning the person called Jesus Christ, are made cases on purpose to lug in, and that very clumsily, some broken sentences from the Old Testament, and apply them as prophecies of those cases, and that so far from his being the Son of God, he did not exist even as a man; that he is merely an imaginary or allegorical character, as Apollo, Hercules, Jupiter, and all the deities of antiquity were. There is no history written at the time Jesus Christ is said to have lived, that speaks of the existence of such a person, even as a man. Did we find in any other book, pretending to give a system of religion, the falsehoods, falsifications, contradictions, and absurdities which are to be met with in almost every page of the Old and New Testament, all the priests of the present day, who supposed themselves capable, would triumphantly shew their skill in criticism, and cry it down as a most glaring imposition; but since the books in question belong to their own trade and profession, they, or at least many of them, seek to stifle every enquiry into them, and abuse those who have the honesty and the courage to do it. They tell us, that Jesus arose from the dead and ascended into Heaven: it is very easy to say so; a great lie is as easily told as a little one; but if he had done so, these would have been the only circumstances respecting him that would have differed from the common lot of man, and consequently the only case that would apply exclusively to him as prophecy, would be some passage in the Old Testament, that foretold such things of him; but there is not a passage in the Old Testament that speaks of a person who, after being crucified, dead, and buried, should arise from the dead and ascend into Heaven. Our prophecy-mongers supply the silence, by telling us of passages they call prophecies, and that falsely so, about Joseph's dreams, old clothes, broken bones, and such like trifling stuff."

I now entreat the Jury to mark the manner in which the opinions of the author are summed up:—

"Now (says he) had the news of salvation by Jesus Christ been inscribed on the face of the sun and the moon, in characters that all

nations would have understood, the whole earth had known it in twenty-four hours, and all nations would have believed it. Whereas, though it is now almost 2,000 years since, as they tell us, Christ came upon earth, not a twentieth part of the people of the earth know any thing of it, and among those who do, the wiser part do not believe it. I have now, reader, gone through all the passages called prophecies of Jesus Christ, and shewn there is no such thing. I have examined the story told of Jesus Christ, and compared the several circumstances of it with that revelation, which, as Middleton wisely says, 'God has made to us of his power and wisdom in the structure of the universe, and by which every thing ascribed to him is to be tried.' The result is, that the story of Christ has not one trait, either in its character or in the means employed, that bears the least resemblance to the power and wisdom of God, as demonstrated in the creation of the universe. All the means are human means—slow, uncertain, and inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed, and therefore the whole is a fabulous invention and undeserving of credit. The priests of the present day profess to believe it, they gain their living by it, and they exclaim against something they call infidelity. I will define what it is: *he that believes in the story of Christ is an infidel to God.*"

I have now, Gentlemen, gone through the counts of the indictment against the defendant, and have I not read enough? Have I not proved, taking Christianity to be the law of the land, and that which is not to be reviled by word or writing, that the defendant has offended against the law? Has he or has he not reviled the Christian Religion? Gentlemen, if you can put your hands to your hearts and say he has not, he will be entitled to his acquittal: but if you should be of a contrary opinion, as I think you must be, then you will only be discharging your duty to God and your country, by convicting him. I have seen it and heard it said, that this prosecution has been instituted for other purposes; but, Gentlemen, it has not, and such assertions are without foundation. This prosecution has not originated in any disposition to interfere with opinions which may be entertained upon disputed topics. No, praise be to Him who sent it! notwithstanding the various differences of opinion existing between the various sects and classes of the earth, the Christian religion has endured for ages, because it is built upon a rock, which all the infidels of other times have in vain endeavoured to assail. To use the words of Mr. Locke, "The religion of this country has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its subject and its matter." Such a religion cannot be affected by the works of Paine; or those of

greater men. But protection must be afforded to the people against such impious missiles as are there flung out against their happiness and peace. Prosecutions for such calumnies against religion are necessary for the public good, although the religion itself has no need of support from the arm of man, for in my conscience I believe that persecution alone can injure it. But this prosecution has not been instituted for the purpose of oppressing any individual. No, it has been only instituted for the purpose of protecting the lower and illiterate classes from having their faith sapped and their minds divested from those principles of morality, which are so powerfully inculcated by the Christian religion. The gospel is preached particularly for the poor. It is calculated to shew them the vanity of all earthly things: it enables them to bear up against the pressure of misery and misfortune, and teaches them to rely upon those rewards which they shall earn by leading a life of honesty, sobriety, and deference to the laws of God, and of their country. But when such terrible productions as those now under consideration are put into their hands, into the hands of those who unlike the rich, the informed, and the powerful, are unable to draw distinctions between ingenious though mischievous arguments, and divine truths—the consequences are too frightful to be contemplated. It is said of vice that it becomes familiar by being known, and it will be so in the same manner with infidelity. I repeat again, there is no intention of prosecuting any man for his religious opinions, provided they be not promulgated in such a manner as to produce positive mischief to the community. It is not for me, Gentlemen, to dictate to you the line of conduct you are to pursue. I am addressing twelve gentlemen of education, and consideration in life; I have stated to you what I apprehend to be clearly the law on this subject, namely, that to ridicule Christianity is an offence at common law. That offence is imputed to the Defendant on the present indictment. The eyes of the country, Gentlemen, are upon your proceedings; and your deliberations and determination are looked to with a painful anxiety. Much do I lament that, although a great length of time has elapsed since the publication of this libel, the subject has not before been brought under your consideration. Unavoidable circumstances have prevented this step. But no time, however, has unnecessarily been lost, and whatever delays have taken place, are solely to be attributed to the forms of law, and to other occurrences which

were not within my controul. The Defendant exercised the right of traversing, which produced a certain delay. It was impossible, from certain circumstances, that it could have been tried in April—and this is the first opportunity at which it could have been brought forward. I repeat it, Gentlemen, that the eyes of the country are upon you—all the religious—all the moral—all the thinking part of mankind are waiting anxiously the decision of this case. It is to be decided by you, Gentlemen of the Jury, whether Christianity is a fabulous imposture, and whether we are to continue under that religious part of the system of our constitution, to which we have heretofore looked with confidence and veneration. If the Defendant has committed an offence, and that he has, in my estimation, no man alive can entertain a doubt, after hearing the passages which I have read—I am sure I need not call upon you to be firm in the conscientious discharge of your duty. If you believe that the Defendant has offended against the laws of God and the country, you will, without the slightest hesitation, give a verdict to that effect. It only remains for me to prove the case which I have stated, and this I shall do very shortly, by proving the sale of the book by the Defendant; and unless you have made up your minds to treat as nothing, the solemn obligation of the oath which you have taken, and to consider Christianity as a fable, and as a gross imposition, I am satisfied, upon the facts, that the only verdict which you can return on this occasion will be that of Guilty.

Solicitor General.—Call Griffin Swanson.—Witness being sworn.

Solicitor General.—Are you in the employ of the Solicitors to the Treasury?

Witness.—I am a clerk and messenger in their employ.

Solicitor General.—Did you on the 19th December last go to the shop of the Defendant?

Witness (examining a book).—It was on the 17th of December.

Solicitor General.—Where is that shop situated?

Witness.—On the right hand side of Fleet Street.

Solicitor General.—Do you mean the right hand side going from, or towards, Temple Bar?

Witness.—I mean the right hand side going towards Temple Bar.

Solicitor General.—Did you purchase any thing at that time?

Witness.—Yes; Paine's "Age of Reason."

Solicitor General (*handing him a book*).—Is that the copy?

Witness.—It is.

Solicitor General.—What price did you pay for it?

Witness.—Half a guinea.

Solicitor General.—Who served you?

Witness.—The Defendant himself,

Solicitor General.—Did any conversation take place at the time?

Witness.—Mr. Carlile knew me to belong to the office of the Solicitors to the Treasury, and sent his compliments to Mr. Maule, adding, that if he would allow him to eat his Christmas dinner at home, he should be prepared to meet him.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Carlile*.—Was there any hesitation on my part to serve you?

Witness.—None at all. You did it rather cheerfully. You asked me if I did not want half a dozen copies.

Attorney General.—This closes the case on the part of the Crown.

Chief Justice. As the Defendant wishes the information to be read, the counts, and the passages in the book to which they referred, had better now be read to the Jury.

Solicitor General (to the officer, Mr. *Bellamy*) read the Counts of the Information in succession, and the particular passages charged as libellous, from the book. Mr. *Bellamy* proceeded to read the first Count.—

"LONDON, (to wit). Be it remembered, that Sir Samuel Shepherd, Knight, Attorney-General of our Lord the now King, who prosecutes for our said Lord the King in his behalf in his proper person, cometh here into the court of our said Lord the King, before the King himself at Westminster, on Saturday next after the octave of Saint Hilary, in this same term, and for our said Lord the King giveth the court here to understand and be informed, that *Richard Carlile*, late of London, bookseller, being a wicked, impious, and ill-disposed person, and having no regard for the laws and religion of this realm, but most wickedly, blasphemously, impiously, and profanely devising and intending to asperse, vilify, and ridicule that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament; on the seventeenth day of December, in the fifty-ninth year of the reign of our said present sovereign Lord George the Third, by the grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, at London aforesaid, in the parish of St. Mary le Bow, in the ward of Cheap, did print and publish, and cause to be printed and published, a certain scandalous, impious, and blasphemous libel, of and con-

cerning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, containing therein, amongst other things, divers scandalous, impious, and blasphemous matters, of and concerning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness with which more than half the Bible" (meaning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament) "is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it" (meaning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament,) "the word of a demon, than the word of God. It" (meaning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament) "is a history of wickedness that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind:"—

Mr. Carlile.—I wish the remaining part of the Count to be read, that the Jury may be apprised of the whole of the charge.

Mr. Bellamy then read the remainder as follows:—

"—to the great displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal, infamy, and contempt of the said part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity."

Solicitor General (to Mr. Carlile).—Do you wish the passages in the work to be read?

Mr. Carlile.—Most certainly, the whole of them.

Solicitor General.—In order to avoid reading the passages twice, perhaps the Defendant would read the passages charged as libellous from the book, while the officer reads them from the information.

Chief Justice.—Do you wish to compare the passages just read, with those in the work itself?

Mr. Carlile.—I admit, my Lord, the passages cited to be a true copy, they may as well be read from the information to save time.

"*Second Count.*—And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further gives the court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile, being a wicked, impious, and ill-disposed person, and having no regard for the laws and religion of this realm, but most wickedly, blasphemously, impiously, and profanely devising and intending to asperse, vilify, scandalize, and ridicule that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, on the day and year aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, did print and publish, and cause to be printed and published, a certain other scandalous, impious, and blasphemous libel, of and concerning that part of the

Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, containing therein amongst other things, divers scandalous, impious, and blasphemous matters, of and concerning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "Did the book called the Bible" (meaning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament) "excel in purity of ideas and expression, all the books that are now extant in the world, I would not take it for my rule of faith as being the word of God, because the possibility would, nevertheless, exist of my being imposed upon; but when I see throughout the greatest part of this book," (meaning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament) "scarcely any thing but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales, I cannot dishonour my Creator by calling it by his name," (meaning and intending thereby, that throughout the greatest part of that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, there is scarcely any thing but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of paltry and contemptible tales)—to the great displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal, infamy, and contempt of the Holy Bible, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Third Count. And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further gives the court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile, being a wicked, impious, and ill-disposed person, and having no regard for the laws or religion of this realm, but wickedly, blasphemously, impiously, and profanely devising and intending to asperse, scandalize, vilify, and ridicule the Holy Bible and the Christian Religion, on the day and year aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, did print and publish, and cause to be printed and published, a certain other scandalous, impious, and blasphemous libel, of and concerning the Holy Bible and the Christian religion, containing therein, amongst other things, divers scandalous, impious, and blasphemous matters, of and concerning the Holy Bible and the Christian religion, in one part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "To charge the commission of acts upon the Almighty, which, in their own nature, and by every rule of moral justice, are crimes, as all assassination is, and more especially the assassination of infants, is matter of serious concern. The Bible tells us that those assassinations were done by the express command of God—to believe, therefore, the Bible to be true, we must unbelieve all our belief in the moral justice of God, for wherein could crying or smiling infants offend? And to read the Bible without horror, we must undo every thing that is tender, sympathizing, and benevolent in the heart of man. Speaking for myself, if I" (meaning the writer of the aforesaid libel) "had no other evidence that the Bible is fabulous than the sacrifice I" (meaning the writer of the said libel) "must make to believe it to be true, that alone would be sufficient to determine my choice." And in another part thereof

according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "I have now gone through the examination of the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John," (meaning the four Holy Gospels, in that part of the Holy Bible which is called the New Testament,) "and when it is considered that the whole space of time from the crucifixion" (meaning the crucifixion of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus Christ) "to what is called the ascension, is but a few days, apparently not more than three or four, and that all circumstances are reported to have happened nearly about the same spot, Jerusalem, it is, I believe, impossible to find in any story upon record, so many and such glaring absurdities, contradictions, and falsehoods as are in those books:" (meaning thereby that there are glaring absurdities, contradictions, and falsehoods in those books)—to the great displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal, infamy, contempt, and ridicule of the Holy Bible and the Christian religion, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Chief Justice.—Do you admit all the passages, for I did not understand you to admit them so generally?

Mr. Carlile.—My Lord, I admit them all.

Chief Justice.—Very well.

Fourth Count.—And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further gives the Court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile, being a wicked, impious, and evil disposed person, and having no regard for the laws or religion of this realm, but wickedly, blasphemously, impiously, and profanely devising and intending to asperse, vilify, and ridicule that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, on the day and year aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, did print and publish, and cause to be printed and published, a certain other scandalous, impious, and blasphemous libel, of and concerning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, containing therein, amongst other things, divers scandalous, impious, and blasphemous matters, of and concerning that part of the Bible which is called the Old Testament, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "It" (meaning that part of the Bible which is called the Old Testament) "is a Book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy:"—to the great displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal and infamy of the said part of the Holy Bible which is called the Old Testament, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Fifth Count.—And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further gives the court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile being a wicked, impious, and evil disposed person, and having no regard for the laws or religion of this realm, but wickedly, impiously, and blasphemously devising and intending to asperse, vilify, discredit, and

ridicule the Christian religion, on the day and year aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, did wickedly, impiously, and profanely publish, and cause to be published, a certain other scandalous, impious, profane, and blasphemous libel, of and concerning the Christian religion, containing therein, amongst other things, divers scandalous, impious, profane, and blasphemous matters, of and concerning the Christian religion, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "As it is nothing extraordinary that a woman should be with child before she was married, and that the son she might bring forth should be executed even unjustly, I see no reason for not believing that such a woman as Mary," (meaning the Blessed Virgin Mary) "and such a Man as Joseph and Jesus," (meaning our Saviour Jesus Christ) "existed; their mere existence is a matter of indifference, about which there is no ground either to believe or to disbelieve, and which comes under the common head of, It may be so, and what then? The probability, however, is, that there were such persons, or at least such as resembled them in part of the circumstances, because almost all romantic stories have been suggested by some actual circumstances, as the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, not a word of which is true, were suggested by the case of Alexander Selkirk. It is not then the existence or non-existence of the persons that I trouble myself about. It is the fable of Jesus Christ, as told in the New Testament, and the wild and visionary doctrine raised thereon, against which I contend. The story, taking it as it is told, is blasphemously obscene; it gives an account of a young woman engaged to be married, and while under this engagement she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost, under the impious pretence (Luke, chap. i. ver 35) that the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee:" to the great displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal and infamy of the Christian religion, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Sixth Count.—And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further gives the Court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile, being a wicked, impious, and evil-disposed person, and having no regard for the laws or religion of this realm, but wickedly, impiously, and blasphemously devising and intending to asperse, vilify, and ridicule the Christian religion, on the day and year aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, did wickedly, impiously, and profanely publish, and cause to be published, a certain other scandalous, impious, profane, and blasphemous libel, of and concerning the Christian religion, containing therein, amongst other things, divers scandalous, impious, profane, and blasphemous matters, of and concerning the Christian religion, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "What is it the Testament," (meaning that part of the Holy Bible which is called the New Testament) "teaches us? to believe that the Al-

mightily committed debauchery with a woman engaged to be married! and the belief of this debauchery is called faith:"—to the great displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal, infamy, and contempt of the Christian religion, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Seventh Count.—And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, farther gives the court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile being an evil disposed and wicked person, and disregarding the laws and religion of this realm, and wickedly and profanely intending to bring the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt, among all the liege subjects of our said Lord the King, did heretofore, to wit, on the same day and year aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, unlawfully and wickedly print and publish, and cause to be printed and published, a certain other scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane libel, of and concerning the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion, containing therein, among other things, divers scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane matters, of and concerning the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion in one part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "But the case is, that people have been so long in the habit of reading the books called the Bible" (meaning that part of the Holy Bible called the Old Testament) "and Testament" (meaning that part of the Holy Bible called the New Testament,) "with their eyes shut, and their senses locked up, that the most stupid inconsistencies have passed on them for truth, and imposition for prophecy. The all-wise Creator hath been dishonoured by being made the author of a fable, and the human mind degraded by believing it." And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "I forbear making any remark on this abominable imposition of Matthew," (meaning the holy Evangelist Saint Matthew,) "the thing glaringly speaks for itself; it is priests and commentators that I rather ought to censure for having preached falsehood so long, and kept people in darkness, with respect to those impositions. I am not contending with these men upon points of doctrine, for I know that sophistry has always a city of refuge; I am speaking of facts; for wherever the thing called a fact is a falsehood, the faith founded upon it is delusion, and the doctrine raised upon it not true. Ah! reader, put thy trust in thy Creator, and thou wilt be safe, but if thou trustest to the book called the Scriptures," (meaning the Holy Scriptures,) "thou trustest to the rotten staff of fable and falsehood." And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "I have now, reader, gone through and examined all the passages which the four books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John," (meaning the four holy Gospels,) "quote from the Old Testament, and call them prophecies of Jesus Christ. When first

I set down to this examination, I expected to find cause for some censure, but little did I expect to find them so utterly destitute of truth, and of all pretensions to it, as I have shewn them to be; the practice which the writers of those books employ is not more false than it is absurd; they state some trifling case of the person they call Jesus Christ, and then cut out a sentence from some passage of the Old Testament and call it a prophecy of that case. But when the words thus cut out are restored to the place they are taken from, and read with the words before and after them, they give the lie to the New Testament; a short instance or two of this will suffice for the whole." And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "These repeated forgeries and falsifications create a well founded suspicion, that all the cases spoken of concerning the person called Jesus Christ are made cases on purpose to lug in, and that very clumsily, some broken sentences from the Old Testament, and apply them as prophecies of those cases, and that so far from his being the Son of God, he did not exist even as a man; that he is merely an imaginary or allegorical character, as Apollo, Hercules, Jupiter, and all the deities of antiquity were. There is no history written at the time Jesus Christ is said to have lived that speaks of the existence of such a person, even as a man. Did we find in any other book, pretending to give a system of religion, the falsehoods, falsifications, contradictions, and absurdities which are to be met with in almost every page of the Old and New Testament, all the priests of the present day, who supposed themselves capable, would triumphantly shew their skill in criticism, and cry it down as a most glaring imposition; but since the books in question belong to their own trade and profession, they, or at least, many of them, seek to stifle every inquiry into them, and abuse those who have the honesty and the courage to do it." And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "They tell us, that Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven; it is very easy to say so; a great lie is as easily told as a little one; but if he had done so, there would have been the only circumstances respecting him that would have differed from the common lot of man, and consequently the only case that would apply exclusively to him as prophecy, would be some passage in the Old Testament, that foretold such things of him; but there is not a passage in the Old Testament that speaks of a person who, after being crucified, dead and buried, should rise from the dead and ascend into Heaven. Our prophecy-mongers supply the silence the Old Testament guards upon such things, by telling us of passages they call prophecies, and that falsely, so about Joseph's dreams, old clothes, broken bones, and such like trifling stuff." And in another part thereof, according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "Now had the news of salvation by Jesus Christ been inscribed on the face of the sun and the moon, in characters that all nations would have understood, the whole earth had

known it in twenty-four hours, and all nations would have believed it. Whereas, though it is now almost two thousand years since, as they tell us, Christ came upon earth, not a twentieth part of the people of the earth know any thing of it, and among those who do, the wiser part do not believe it. I have now, reader, gone through all the passages called prophecies of Jesus Christ, and shewn there is no such thing. I have examined the story told of Jesus Christ and compared the several circumstances of it with that revelation, which, as Middleton wisely says, God has made to us of his power and wisdom in the structure of the universe, and by which every thing ascribed to him is to be tried. The result is, that the story of Christ has not one trait, either in its character or in the means employed, that bears the least resemblance to the power and wisdom of God, as demonstrated in the creation of the universe. All the means are human means, slow, uncertain, and inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed, and therefore the whole is a fabulous invention, and undeserving of credit. The priests of the present day profess to believe it, they gain their living by it, and they exclaim against something they call infidelity. I will define what it is—he that believes in the story of Christ, is an infidel to God :” to the high displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal of the Christian religion, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Eighth Count. And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further gives the Court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile, further impiously and profanely devising and intending as last aforesaid, did afterwards (to wit) on the same day and year aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, unlawfully and wickedly publish and cause to be published, a certain other scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane libel, of and concerning the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion, containing therein, amongst other things, certain scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane matters and things, of and concerning the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion, to the tenor and effect following (that is to say) “ These repeated forgeries and falsifications create a well founded suspicion that all the cases spoken of concerning the person called Jesus Christ, are made cases on purpose to lug in, and that very clumsily, some broken sentences from the Old Testament, and apply them as prophecies of those cases, and that so far from his being the Son of God, he did not exist even as a man ; that he is merely an imaginary or allegorical character, as Apollo, Hercules, Jupiter, and all the deities of antiquity were. There is no history written at the time Jesus Christ is said to have lived that speaks of the existence of such a person, even as a man. Did we find in any other book, pretending to give a system of religion, the falsehoods, falsifications, contradictions, and absurdities which are to

be met with in almost every page of the Old and New Testament, all the priests of the present day who supposed themselves capable, would triumphantly shew their skill in criticism, and cry it down as a most glaring imposition; but since the books in question belong to their own trade and profession, they, or at least many of them, seek to stifle every enquiry into them, and abuse those who have the honesty and the courage to do it:”—to the high displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal of the Christian religion, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Ninth Count. And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further gives the Court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile, further impiously and wickedly devising and intending to bring the Christian religion into contempt and disbelief among the liege subjects of our said Lord the King, afterwards (to wit) on the same day and year last aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, did unlawfully and wickedly publish, and cause to be published, a certain other scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane libel, of and concerning the history of our Saviour Jesus Christ, containing therein, among other things, certain scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane matters, of and concerning the history of our Saviour Jesus Christ, to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) “Now had the news of salvation by Jesus Christ been inscribed on the face of the sun and the moon, in characters that all nations would have understood, the whole earth had known it twenty-four hours, and all nations would have believed it; whereas, though it is now almost two thousand years since, as they tell us, Christ came upon earth, not a twentieth part of the people of the earth knew any thing of it, and among those who do, the wiser part do not believe it. I have now, reader, gone through all the passages called prophecies of Jesus Christ, and shewn there is no such thing. I have examined the story told of Jesus Christ, and compared the several circumstances of it with that revelation, which, as Middleton wisely says, God has made to us of his power and wisdom in the structure of the universe, and by which every thing ascribed to him is to be tried. The result is, that the story of Christ has not one trait, either in its character or in the means employed, that bears the least resemblance to the power and wisdom of God as demonstrated in the creation of the universe. All the means are human means, slow, uncertain, and inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed, and therefore the whole is a fabulous invention and undeserving of credit. The priests of the present day profess to believe it, they gain their living by it, and they exclaim against something they call infidelity. I will define what it is: he that believes in the story of Christ is an infidel to God:”—to the high displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal of the religion of this realm as by law established, to the evil ex-

ample of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Tenth Count. And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further giveth the Court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile, further impiously and profanely devising and intending to bring that part of the Holy Scriptures called the New Testament, and also the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt among the liege subjects of our said Lord the King, did afterwards (to wit) on the same day and year last aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, unlawfully and wickedly publish, and cause to be published, a certain other scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane libel, of and concerning the said part of the Holy Scriptures called the New Testament, and the Christian religion, containing therein, amongst other things, certain scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane matters and things, of and concerning the said part of the Holy Scriptures called the New Testament, and the Christian religion, to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "For my own part, I do not believe there is one word of historical truth in the whole book," (meaning that part of the Holy Scriptures called the New Testament.) I look upon it at best to be a romance, the principal personage of which is an imaginary or allegorical character founded upon some tale, and in which the moral is in many parts good, and the narrative part very badly and blunderingly written:"—to the high displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal of the Christian religion, to the evil example of all other persons, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

Eleventh Count. And the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, for our said Lord the King, further gives the Court here to understand and be informed, that the said Richard Carlile further impiously and wickedly devising and intending to bring the Holy Scriptures into disbelief and contempt among the liege subjects of our said Lord the King, afterwards (to wit) on the same day and year last aforesaid, at London aforesaid, in the parish and ward aforesaid, did unlawfully and wickedly publish and cause to be published, of and concerning the Holy Scriptures, a certain other scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane libel, containing therein (amongst other things) divers scandalous, impious, blasphemous, and profane matters, of and concerning the Holy Scriptures, in one part thereof according to the tenor and effect following, (that is to say) "But the case is, that people have been so long in the habit of reading the books called the Bible and Testament with their eyes shut, and their senses locked up, that the most stupid inconsistencies have passed on them for truth, and imposition for prophecy. The all-wise Creator hath been dishonoured by being made the author of fable, and the human mind degraded by believing it." And in another part thereof, according to the

tenor and effect following (that is to say) "As to the New Testament," (meaning that part of the Holy Scriptures called the New Testament) "if it be brought and tried by that standard, which, as Middleton wisely says, God has revealed to our senses of his almighty power and wisdom in the creation and government of the visible universe, it will be found equally as false, paltry, and absurd as the Old," (meaning that part of the Holy Scriptures called the Old Testament)—to the high displeasure of Almighty God, to the great scandal of the Christian religion, to the evil example of all others, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity. Whereupon the said Attorney-General of our said Lord the King, who for our said Lord the King in this behalf prosecuteth for our said Lord the King, prayeth the consideration of the Court here in the premises, and that due process of law may be awarded against him the said Richard Carlile in this behalf, to make him answer to our said Lord the King, touching and concerning the premises aforesaid.

The Counts being now read,

Mr. *Carlile* observed, I will dispense, my Lord, with the further reading of the passages charged as libellous.

The *Chief Justice* nodded assent; and after a short pause,

Mr. *Carlile* rose, and spoke to the following effect:

Gentlemen of the Jury,

I rise in my own defence, and I stand before you with a deep impression of the importance of the question now under your consideration; that question is of no less importance, than, whether the doctrines or creeds of any man or sect of persons shall be deemed infallible and screened from investigation, or whether we shall in this country, where toleration and the liberty of the press are so much boasted of, be placed under the continual fear of being harassed with prosecution and ruinous expense, similar to this under which I am now struggling, for a fair, candid, honest, calm, and argumentative enquiry into the origin of the religious establishments of this and other countries. It is a question of the first magnitude; it is a question that requires the most extensive research and examination; it is a question that requires open and unrestrained discussion; it is a question, that, on your part, requires the most mature deliberation. I feel an imperative necessity in examining it in all its bearings; and the justification of defending not only my intentions as a publisher of the *Age of Reason*, but the intentions of its author also, presuming that we were actuated by similar motives; which motives, Gentlemen of the Jury, I shall make appear to you were good, and not wicked and

blasphemous as the Information falsely sets forth: I have therefore, Gentlemen of the Jury, to entreat your patience to a full investigation of the real merits of this publication, and that you will not think the time (however long) mis-spent, when the eyes of the whole country are anxiously turned towards you, with a hope that you will not hesitate to give a verdict according to your consciences and the evidence adduced before you.

Gentlemen of the Jury, I have said the eyes of the whole country are turned towards you; it is a question in which all feel interested, for amongst the immense number of communications I have received from various parts of the country, some with congratulations and some for condolence, on the subject of the prosecutions, I have found many avowing their belief in the Christian doctrines and the validity of the books called the Old and New Testament, and yet deprecating the prosecution of any person for enquiring into them. I am satisfied that all the reasonable and unprejudiced part of the community will sympathize with me, and hail with pleasure the verdict of Not Guilty. But they who would call for a verdict of guilty are persons of like dispositions to those who formerly kindled the flames in Smithfield, and have sanctioned all the massacre and torture that have been predominant since the origin of Christianity: I have no hesitation in saying, that where the disposition has been intolerant, depraved, and oppressive, Christianity has had no restraint on it, but has been a cloak for its vices.

Before I go further into the argument, I will make some few observations on what has fallen from Mr. Attorney-General.

The Learned Gentleman has opened his speech with the usual *cant*, yes, *cant* I may call it, which all Attornies-General and prosecutors have used for many years, about the liberty of the press and the importance of free discussion. But I do not think he has evinced much of the spirit of either in the observations he has just addressed to you. He calls upon you to stop both in their progress, and his whole charge amounts to no more than has often been made before, and made in very nearly the same terms. His whole speech is no more than a parody on the speeches of former Attornies-General. He talks of the liberty and the licentiousness of the Press, but how has he attempted to define it? There is no novelty in the arguments he has used, nor no difficulty in refuting them. He states, Gentlemen, that the eyes of the country are upon you, and I say so too

and I hope to make it appear to you, that I am not the person described by that Learned Gentleman. He has said, that the Christian religion proceeds from God, that the Christian religion teaches mildness and forbearance: then why does he bring me here? Because his ideas differ from mine as regards the Deity—that Deity who does not need the Attorney-General to protect him. The Learned Gentleman says, there is a law applicable to this case, but he went no further than asserting it. And if there really be a law applicable to the case, I am sure he will have no hesitation to admit that the thirty-nine Articles are part and parcel of the law. Now, the first of these articles, entitled, “Of Faith in the Holy Trinity,” sets out, that

“There is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body, parts, or passions; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Maker, and Preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there be three Persons, of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.”

The doctrine of the Trinity cannot therefore be denied by the Attorney-General—or if it be denied, he does not admit the divinity of what is called Christianity. The Learned Gentleman has quoted, with others, the case of Eaton, which was the last case of the kind, with the exception of Mr. Hone’s case, where the charge was the same, although the charged was different; but subsequent to that case an Act of Parliament was passed for the especial relief of those who impugned the doctrine of the Trinity. Now, how will he be able to reconcile this? The first of the thirty-nine Articles says one thing, and the Act of Parliament says another—they contradict each other, in point of fact, and yet such are the things represented by the Learned Gentleman as part and parcel of the law of the land. I hold in my hand, Gentlemen, the Act of the 53d of the King, which I shall read to you, an Act expressly passed for the relief of the Unitarians, and all other persons who disbelieve the doctrine of the Trinity:—

An Act to relieve persons who impugn the doctrine of the Holy Trinity from certain penalties. 21st July, 1813.

“Whereas, in the nineteenth year of his present Majesty an act was passed, intituled *an act for the further relief of Protestant Dissenting ministers and schoolmasters*; and it is expedient to enact as hereinafter provided: Be it therefore enacted by the King’s most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and Commons, in this present Par-

liament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That so much of an act passed in the first year of the reign of King William and Queen Mary, intituled *an act for exempting his Majesty's Protestant subjects dissenting from the Church of England, from the penalties of certain laws*, as provides that that act or any thing therein contained should not extend or be construed to extend to give any ease, benefit, or advantage to persons denying the *Trinity* as therein mentioned, be and the same is hereby repealed.

"II. And be it further enacted, That the provisions of another act passed in the ninth and tenth years of the reign of King William, intituled *an act for the more effectual suppressing blasphemy and profaneness*, so far as the same relate to persons denying as therein mentioned, respecting the *Holy Trinity*, be and the same are hereby repealed.

"III. And whereas it is expedient to repeal an act, passed in the Parliament of Scotland in the first Parliament of King Charles the Second, intituled *an act against the crime of blasphemy*; and another act, passed in the Parliament of Scotland in the first Parliament of King William, intituled *act against blasphemy*; which acts respectively ordain the punishment of death; be it therefore enacted, That the said acts and each of them shall be, and the same are and is hereby repealed."

Now, Gentlemen, I have no hesitation in asserting, that this act is a repeal of all former acts upon the subject of holding doctrines differing from those of the Trinity; it is, in short, a repeal of the first article of those thirty-nine, which are held to be divine by the great majority of those who call themselves Christians, and without a belief in which they cannot be considered what they profess themselves to be. The latter act, I should imagine, ought to have the first operation; and where two acts are made upon one subject, such as the 9th and 10th of William and Mary, and the 53d of the King, but the latter repealing the former, I should take the latest as the existing law upon the subject. And if that be the case, which cannot be denied, Deism is also a part and parcel of the law of the land. For myself, I believe the Deity to be single and without any appendages. As such I worship and revere him, and cannot imagine why the open avowal of my belief should call for the interference of this or any other court. The act before me tolerates the impugning of the Trinity—it relieves those who so impugn it, from all the penalties enforced or contained in all former acts upon the subject, and therefore most decidedly admits Deism, and should, to deal out justice, protect its professors from all punishment. I know of no law, or of any court of law that can properly take

cognizance of a charge of *blasphemy*, which consisting in speaking ill or irreverently of the Deity, is a matter between the person offending and the Deity offended. It is for him alone to deal as he thinks proper with a blasphemer. But this act which I have read, allows persons to disbelieve the Trinity, and so far to blaspheme or impugn that doctrine, on which Christianity rests for its support. It is difficult, however, to define the meaning of the word blasphemy.

The Attorney-General says, the information against me is founded on the common law; but I think resort should never be had to the common law in preference to the statute law, and under the statute I have cited to you, I felt myself justified in publishing the *Age of Reason* by Mr. Paine. I am aware there is a statute called the 9th and 10th of William and Mary, entitled "An Act for the more effectual suppressing of blasphemy and profaneness."

"Whereas many persons have of late years openly avowed and published many blasphemous and impious opinions, contrary to the doctrines and principles of the Christian religion, greatly tending to the dishonour of Almighty God, and may prove destructive to the peace and welfare of this kingdom: Wherefore, for the more effectual suppressing of the said detestable crimes, be it enacted by the King's most excellent majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords spiritual and temporal, and the Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, That if any person or persons, having been educated in, or at any time having made profession of the Christian religion within this realm, shall by writing, printing, teaching, or advised speaking, deny any one of the persons in the Holy Trinity to be God, or shall assert or maintain there are more Gods than one, or shall deny the Christian religion to be true, or the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be of Divine authority, and shall upon indictment or information in any of his Majesty's courts at Westminster, or at the assizes, be thereof lawfully convicted by the oath of two or more credible witnesses; such person or persons for the first offence shall be adjudged incapable and disabled in law, to all intents and purposes whatsoever, to have or enjoy any office or offices, employment or employments, ecclesiastical, civil or military, or any part in them, or any profit and advantage appertaining to them, or any of them: And if any person or persons so convicted as aforesaid, shall at the time of his or their conviction, enjoy or possess any office, place or employment, such office, place or employment shall be void, and is hereby declared void: And if such person or persons shall be a second time lawfully convicted as aforesaid, of all or any the aforesaid crime or crimes, that then he or they shall from thenceforth be disabled to sue, prosecute, plead or use any action or information in any court of law or

equity, or to be guardian of any child, or executor or administrator of any person, or capable of any legacy or deed of gift, or to bear any office, civil or military, or benefice ecclesiastical for ever within this realm, and shall also suffer imprisonment for the space of three years, without bail or mainprize, from the time of such conviction."

But, Gentlemen, you must perceive that the act of 53d of the King goes to repeal the act of William and Mary, as far as it relates to persons denying or impugning the Holy Trinity. As to the charge of blasphemy, there are parts of the act of William and Mary, under which I might be prosecuted; and I believe it is the only statute which we have as applicable to a charge of that nature. There is, as I have said, an unrepealed part of the old act, under which I might be prosecuted, namely, that which incapacitates persons denying "the Holy Scripture of the Old and New Testament to be of Divine authority," from holding any office or employment, civil, ecclesiastical, or military. But the present information is not founded upon this statute, and, Gentlemen, I will tell you the reason, because in case of conviction, the punishment would not be equal to what the Learned Gentleman's disposition aims at. He says he has grounded the information on the common law, in preference to that of the statute law, but I do not know what the common law is. The lawyers say, the decisions of judges are the common law, that it resides in their breasts; but I am not satisfied the law should rest upon the *dictum* of the Judge. All laws should be plain and simple, in order to be easily understood—that we might know what to do, and what to avoid. It should be reduced to a written code, in order that the people might know what they had to expect. But this is not the case in the present instance. There is, in fact, no law by which I can be now properly brought before you; there is no Court of justice competent to try a question of honest difference of opinion on religious matters. I challenge the Attorney-General to produce any such law if he can. I know he cannot, but he relies on the Court to make out that case, which he is not capable of doing himself. He says it would be waste of time, it would be quite idle for him, to defend the doctrines of Christianity; but if he could do so, I do not think it would be such an idle waste of time, as the Learned Gentleman has thought proper to say it would be. If he does not defend it, you will know why he does not; but that is a matter which I do not at this moment mean to press on your attention. He goes on to state

in the usual way, in the way always adopted by all Attornies-General, when bringing a charge of blasphemy against any individual, that you are bound by your oaths to return a verdict of guilty. Then why do any more than swear you? For it would spare a considerable time, if you pronouced your verdict immediately upon entering that box. He says you are pledged by your oaths, and under the sanction of your holy religion you cannot do otherwise than find me guilty : but this I deny. You are merely sworn to try the question at issue between me and the Attorney-General. You are sworn to ascertain if I had any *malicious intention* in publishing the works of Paine ; and if I had not such intention, I am entitled to a verdict of *acquittal*. I published the works of Paine for a good and useful purpose, and I trust I shall shew you, Gentlemen, there is nothing in them of an immoral tendency

The Attorney-General frequently repeated that there were laws, under which I might be prosecuted for the alledged crime of blasphemy, but he contented himself with repeating it merely, and never attempted to state definitively what the law was. But there is a law! Yes, no doubt, but with the repetition of "there is such a law," the Learned Gentleman seemed satisfied. Yet after all this repetition, I hope, Gentlemen of the Jury, I have already satisfied you, that there is no such law.

Prior to the act of 1813, there was a statute in existence on this subject, but it has been since repealed, which is of itself an admission that the former law was unjust. Blasphemy cannot be defined ; for what one man may consider blasphemy, another may look upon in a contrary light. The first case cited by the Attorney-General was that of Taylor, who, he said, used blasphemous expressions of so horrid a nature that he could not read them to the Jury. They were not worse, however, he observed, than those contained in the Age of Reason. But, notwithstanding all this statement, he read copious extracts from the work. What the expressions were he could not tell ; but it appeared that Sir Matthew Hale would not let the man justify them. Now, it is worthy of observation, that Sir Matthew Hale sat on the Bench, and condemned two women to be burned at the stake for witchcraft. And if he had such an opinion with respect to witchcraft, he might also be fallible on the subject of blasphemy. Sir Matthew Hale might have been a very moral man, and yet believe in witchcraft or other equally ridiculous absurdities. The Attorney-General says it is an offence to say religion is

a cheat, but he made no observation on their varieties, where Jews called Christianity a cheat; where Christians called the religion of the Jews a cheat, the Bramins called that of the Mohammedans a cheat, the Mohammedans that of the Bramins a cheat, and so on *ad infinitum*. All religions call those that differ from them cheats, or as often as one obtained the ascendancy it never failed to crush and to revile the others. The Attorney-General next quoted the case of Woollston. At the time of that prosecution there was a very prevalent tendency towards free-thinking. Woollston, when apprehended for publishing his book, insisted there was no Judge or Jury capable of trying him, on account of his opinion. He was a man of most extensive erudition and research, well acquainted with the Hebrew and other languages, and insisted on it, that from the ignorance of the Judge and Jury in those languages, they were not competent to try him. I know the objection was over-ruled; and he was convicted, and sent to the King's Bench Prison. But what was the consequence? So conscious was he of the rectitude of his conduct, that he sold his book in the Prison; and was assisted and supported by many persons called devout and learned divines. The Attorney-General likewise quoted the case of Williams, who originally published the first and second parts of the "Age of Reason." But he was a man who did not venture to defend himself. He left his defence in the hands of Mr. Kyd, who came into Court determined to defend him; but, being a barrister, he suffered himself to be put down and silenced by Lord Kenyon. He wished to justify Paine's expressions by reading part of the Bible, but Lord Kenyon prevented him.

Chief Justice. I do not believe the circumstances attending that case are stated exactly as they occurred.

Mr. Carlile. My Lord, Mr. Kyd wished to justify Paine's assertions by reading extracts from the Bible, but he was prevented from doing so by the Judge.

Chief Justice. Lord Kenyon allowed Mr. Kyd not only to read several passages, but also to comment upon them. He was considered, however, to have proceeded too far. And my Lord Kenyon, when subsequently delivering the judgment of the court, expressed his regret at having allowed Mr. Kyd to proceed as he had done.

Mr. Carlile. Well, my Lord. The case of Eaton, Gentlemen of the Jury, was next quoted by the Attorney-General; it was an indictment by some society or other for a blasphemous publication. But that part published by Eaton was

not the same as that on which Williams was prosecuted. Eaton did not entrust his cause to a barrister, he attempted to defend himself, but not on the same ground that had been taken by Mr. Kyd. He was, at the time, a man far advanced in years, and did not possess physical power sufficient to go into his defence. He was, besides, frequently interrupted by Lord Ellenborough, and as often persisted in his mode of defence, until Lord Ellenborough, wearied with interrupting him, told him to go on as long as he pleased, and to begin it again, if he liked. In the end he was convicted; but it should be recollected, that there was then a law applicable to his case, which, since that time, has been repealed; but now there is no law under which any court can take cognizance of blasphemy. The face of the record exhibits a charge of blasphemy against me, and exhibits nothing else. The Attorney-General has said, in the course of his observations, that this publication could have no effect on the morals of learned and intelligent men, but that it is calculated to corrupt the principles of the lower classes of society. And I would ask the Learned Gentleman, whether, in the present state of the country, any of the lower orders could lay down their half-guinea for the book? Three thousand copies have been sold since December last, and let the Attorney-General shew a single instance, if he can, in which the work has been productive of an evil tendency. It was circulated amongst that class of society which was capable of spending half-a-guinea—and I do not believe a solitary instance could be adduced of its having corrupted the mind of any person. The Learned Gentleman said, he was disgusted with the work, and that the duty of reading it was a most painful one. But however painful it might be, the question was brought into court by his predecessor in office, and he has himself thought fit to lay it before the Jury. The Learned Gentleman has made an appeal to the feelings of the Jury, whom he sought to influence by a reference to their duties as fathers of families. He did not, however, refer to the book itself, in which there is not an immoral sentence. In the work it is said that the Bible contains "obscene stories, voluptuous debaucheries, cruel and torturous executions, and unrelenting vindictiveness." If this is not the case, the assertion must fall to the ground—but if it can be justified, then that which the Jury will avoid placing in the hands of their children, is the work which contains those voluptuous stories. The Attorney-General said, he felt it to be his duty to investigate this

question thoroughly. He has not, however, done so. But I will go through the book, paragraph by paragraph, and shew that there is not a single immoral expression in it. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General's speech is full of repetitions. He said more than once that the Jury were bound to find me guilty, upon their oaths; of course, if he were right, all inquiry and investigation are unnecessary, and the Jury, by the oath they have taken—and merely for having taken such oath—are bound to bring in a verdict of guilty. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General read the matter in the third and fourth counts of the information, without making any observation whatever upon them; sometimes, indeed, he made gestures, and at other times he favoured you with smiles, but he said nothing in the way of refutation. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General said that he could not read the observations on the New Testament, contained in this book, without the utmost pain. He first, indeed, said, he could not bring himself to read them at all, but this you must see was mere declamation and sophistry; he did read those observations. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General has next attacked Mr. Paine's opinion of the miraculous conception, but we all know that the Unitarians treat this part of the story with the same contempt, and that they have actually published a New Testament, omitting that part of it as a falsehood. He calls the work a coarse attack on the religious profession of the country. For myself, I do not know what religious profession he means—I know not what particular profession he is of now, but if I have been rightly informed, he was educated an Unitarian: his whole family, his father, his brothers, and nearest relations, have been, and still are Unitarians—are of that very body, for whose protection the act of parliament I have cited has been passed; but whether the Learned Gentleman changed his religion since he has been promoted in his profession, it is not for me to say, but I have been told that he was one of those who held up his hand for the passing of this statute law. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General says, he hoped for my reformation, as well as the author of this work; he said that in his calmer moments Mr. Paine, and the Defendant himself must have felt the truths of the Christian religion. Gentlemen, for myself I am free to declare, that I have strong doubts of the truth of that religion, and as to Mr. Paine, who has gone to his account, he expressed himself on this subject in terms sufficiently strong not to have his sentiments mistaken. The Attorney-General declared that

this prosecution was not instituted for purposes of persecution; but, Gentlemen, I hope to make it clear to you, that it is for persecuting purposes the prosecution is instituted: for the purpose of persecution on a mere difference of opinion. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General has told you, that Christianity did not stand in need of the assistance of the secular arm. And, if Christianity does not stand in need of his interference, is it not gross presumption in him to come into this Court to protect it? If he believes it to be of divine origin, is it not extremely presumptuous in him to defend it? This conduct, Gentlemen, furnishes a strong proof that the present Attorney-General, like many of the law officers of the crown before him, feels it necessary to hold up the terrors of prosecution against free enquiry on this most important of all subjects. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General has stated to you, that it is an offence against the common law of the land to revile Christianity. Gentlemen, what is Christianity? The articles of the Christian church expressly state, that the Christian God is composed of three persons; Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; the doctrine of the Trinity is the first, the most essential, and the most indispensable doctrine of Christians; yet those who do not believe in that doctrine, those who have openly disavowed it, those who have, in the words of the Attorney-General, reviled this religion, have not only *not* been punished, but are protected by the statute law of the land. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General has told you, that my trial has been delayed, and he has put the causes of this delay on my shoulders: but he is not justifiable in doing so. Why was not this trial brought on after the Easter sittings? It might have been brought on then with as little inconvenience as now; it is true, that other causes were fixed for trial before it, but it is equally true that it is now put out of its order, and takes precedence of one hundred previous causes; it might have been brought before you, Gentlemen, at all events, in the beginning of last June. But the Attorney-General has said, that I took advantage of the forms of law, and that I traversed. I did, Gentlemen, traverse for one short term, by which, the hearing of the case was postponed from January to April, but the Crown has ever since lain by. Gentlemen of the Jury, the Attorney-General has confidently called for your verdict of guilty, because he says, it is manifest I have offended God. If this were the mere charge against me—if he could only hope to snatch a verdict of guilty, by saying to impartial men that in the publication of this work I have offended my God, I should

have nothing to fear—I could not doubt of the protecting verdict of honest men. How can he prove—why should he say, that in this act I have offended my God? Why should he thus presumptuously come between me and my Creator? He cannot, in this instance, make guilt apparent—for here guilt exists in the mind alone, and that mind tells me that I have not given offence to God, by giving publicity to what I consider a moral and a useful work, by extending the field of fair enquiry, into which every man might enter. Gentlemen, the Attorney-General again told you, that by the obligation of your oath you were bound to find me guilty. What is this but to shut up the avenues of justice, and to confound my defence? This, Gentlemen, is not candid. He also said that he did not mean to excite prejudice against me; but what was his address but an endeavour, from beginning to end, to stir latent prejudices, which must necessarily, if excited, militate against my defence? Gentlemen, I shall, I trust, be able to shew you, that there is not one immoral expression in the entire of this publication, unless they are quotations from that book which it labours to refute. Here, Gentlemen, are twelve copies of the publication, which, if it be your wish, I shall send up to your box. You will read it with candour, and I have not a doubt, that when every word it contains is freely and fairly considered, ample justice will be done.

I wish every word I state to be deliberately examined, I do nothing under-hand, I wish every thing to be open, and for this purpose have copies of the Age of Reason ready to hand up to you. My Lord (addressing the Bench) I presume there can be no objection to my doing so?

Chief Justice.—The copy produced in evidence will be laid before the Jury if they desire it.

Mr. Carlile.—I can gain nothing, my Lord, by placing improper books in the hands of the Jury. I wish each of the Jury to have one, in order that they may be thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the work.

Chief Justice.—I have no desire to prevent your proceeding in that line which you may think best calculated for your defence.

Mr. Carlile.—I wish, my Lord, that each Juror should be satisfied.

Chief Justice.—So do I. But I cannot allow books to be thus put in without consent. The publication proved in evidence shall be sent to the Jury. I must not suffer any thing to be done here on this occasion, which may hereafter

be drawn into a dangerous or improper precedent. I am willing to allow you any thing which I can legally allow you for the purpose of assisting your defence, but nothing beyond that.

Mr. Carlile.—Then, my Lord, I understand you to give me leave to hand a few copies to the Jury. They are exactly the same as that proved in evidence.

Chief Justice.—Yes, if the Jury wish it; but it is an irregular thing.

Mr. Carlile.—My Lord, the whole charge against me is founded on a difference of opinion, and I wish the Jury to examine deliberately with me, as they go along.

Chief Justice.—Nothing can properly be submitted to the Jury in this way, without their particular desire. It would not be correct so to do. As, however, that may be allowed, they can be so allowed only at the desire of the parties.

(The Jury hesitated to have the work, though some copies of it were ready to be handed up to them.)

Mr. Carlile.—Gentlemen, the book which I now hold in my hand, and which forms the subject of this prosecution, is entitled, “The Theological Works of Thomas Paine.” I have already stated my motives for publishing it, which were of the best and purest description, namely to promote morality and free discussion on every subject. In a short preface to the work, I have stated my reasons for its publication, and I shall read it, in order that they may not be mistaken.

“In presenting to the public the Theological Works of THOMAS PAINE, against which so senseless a clamour has hitherto been raised, the Publisher is actuated by but one simple motive, namely, an enquiry after truth. The very numerous enquiries for the AGE OF REASON since the re-appearance of the Political Works, have been to the Publisher an irresistible inducement to bring forth the present edition. From the applications which have been made to him, he is completely convinced, that the minds of his fellow-citizens are fully and adequately prepared to discuss the merits and demerits of the system of religion which forms so prominent a feature in the establishments of the country. He fully anticipates the senseless and unmeaning charges of “*impiety*” and “*blasphemy*,” that will be exhibited against him by the ignorant and the interested; by the bigot and the hypocrite: to these, however, he is perfectly indifferent, satisfied as he is that his object is to arrive at the truth, and to promote the interests of fair and honest discussion.

“The publisher flatters himself that the present collection will

be republished from time to time, so as to defeat the hopes and wishes of those whose object it has been to suppress them. He confidently anticipates, that when free discussion on all subjects, whether political or theological, literary or scientific, shall be tolerated, that then, and then only, will the human mind, by progressive improvement, arrive at that state, which may be deservedly termed the AGE OF REASON."

Gentlemen, my only reason for publishing the works of Mr. Paine has been an anxious and sincere desire to promote the cause of truth and free discussion. I am convinced in my own mind, that they are calculated to improve morality by promoting inquiry; that they tend to exalt our notions of the Deity; and lead us to a belief of his excellence and love for man. These were my motives for republishing his works, and these are motives which produce a satisfaction within me, that no prosecution, that no persecution, will be able to destroy. I consider the publication as essential to the interests and welfare of the country, and having acted under that impression, I stand acquitted of all the malicious intention imputed to me by my persecutors. Gentlemen, I now proceed to call your attention to the work, which is divided into Three Parts, and is called "The Age of Reason, Part the First, being an Investigation of True and Fabulous Theology, by Thomas Paine."—It commences thus:

"It has been my intention, for several years past, to publish my thoughts upon religion; I am well aware of the difficulties that attend the subject, and from that consideration, had reserved it to a more advanced period of life. I intended it to be the last offering I should make to my fellow citizens of all nations, and that at a time when the purity of the motive that induced me to it, could not admit of a question, even by those who might disapprove the work."

Gentlemen, Mr. Paine was nearly 60 years of age when he wrote the paragraph I have just read to you. He was then in France, it was at the period of the French revolution, when he could not be sure of his existence for a single day; and when, having written under such circumstances, he must certainly be entitled to the praise of sincerity, and of a thorough conviction of the rectitude of his intentions.

"The circumstance that has now taken place in France of the total abolition of the whole national order of priesthood, and of every thing appertaining to compulsive systems of religion, and compulsive articles of faith, has not only precipitated my intention, but rendered a work of this kind exceedingly necessary; lest, in the general wreck of superstition, or false systems of government, and false theology,

we lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true.

“As several of my colleagues, and others of my fellow-citizens of France, have given me the example of making their voluntary and individual profession of faith, I also will make mine; and I do this with all that sincerity and frankness with which the mind of man communicates with itself.”

Gentlemen, the author now proceeds to give you his creed, a creed that must completely refute all the loose and indecent charges which have been so often made against the character of Mr. Paine. This is his creed:—

“I believe in one God, and no more; and I hope for happiness beyond this life.

“I believe the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavouring to make our fellow creatures happy.

“But, lest it should be supposed that I believe many other things in addition to these, I shall, in the progress of this work, declare the things I do not believe, and my reasons for not believing them.

“I do not believe in the creed professed by the Jewish church, by the Roman church, by the Greek church, by the Turkish church, by the Protestant church, nor by any church that I know of. My own mind is my own church.

“All national institutions of churches, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit.”

Gentlemen, my sentiments are in unison with those of Mr. Paine, and I have honesty and boldness enough, even in times like the present, to declare they are so.

“I do not mean by this declaration to condemn those who believe otherwise; they have the same right to their belief as I have to mine. But it is necessary to the happiness of man, that he be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving; it consists in professing to believe what he does not believe.

“It is impossible to calculate the moral mischief, if I may so express it, that mental lying has produced in society. When a man has so far corrupted and prostituted the chastity of his mind, as to subscribe his professional belief to things he does not believe, he has prepared himself for the commission of every other crime. He takes up the trade of a priest for the sake of gain, and, in order to qualify himself for that trade, he begins with a perjury. Can we conceive any thing more destructive to morality than this?

“Soon after I had published the pamphlet, “COMMON SENSE,” in America, I saw the exceeding probability that a revolution in the system of government would be followed by a revolution in the system

of religion. The adulterous connection of church and state, wherever it had taken place, whether Jewish, Christian, or Turkish, had so effectually prohibited by pains and penalties every discussion upon established creeds, and upon first principles of religion, that until the system of government should be changed, those subjects could not be brought fairly and openly before the world; but that whenever this should be done, a revolution in the system of religion would follow, human inventions and priestcraft would be detected; and man would return to the pure, unmixed, and unadulterated belief of one God, and no more.

“Every national church or religion has established itself by pretending some special mission from God, communicated to certain individuals. The Jews have their Moses; the Christians their Jesus Christ, their apostles, and saints; and the Turks their Mahomet, as if the way to God was not open to every man alike.

“Each of those churches shew certain books, which they call *revelation*, or the word of God. The Jews say, that their word of God was given by God to Moses, face to face; the Christians say, that their word of God came by divine inspiration; and the Turks say, that their word of God (the Koran) was brought by an angel from Heaven. Each of those churches accuse the other of unbelief; and, for my own part, I disbelieve them all.

“As it is necessary to affix right ideas to words, I will, before I proceed further into the subject, offer some other observations on the word *revelation*. Revelation, when applied to religion, means something communicated *immediately* from God to man.

“No one will deny or dispute the power of the Almighty to make such a communication, if he pleases. But admitting, for the sake of a case, that something has been revealed to a certain person, and not revealed to any other person, it is revelation to that person only. When he tells it to a second person, a second to a third, a third to a fourth, and so on, it ceases to be a revelation to all those persons. It is revelation to the first person only, and *hearsay* to every other, and, consequently, they are not obliged to believe it.

“It is a contradiction in terms and ideas, to call any thing a revelation that comes to us at second-hand, either verbally or in writing. Revelation is necessarily limited to the first communication—after this, it is only an account of something which that person says was a revelation made to him; and though he may find himself obliged to believe it, it cannot be incumbent on me to believe it in the same manner; for it was not a revelation made to *me*, and I have only his word for it that it was made to him.

“When Moses told the children of Israel that he received the two tables of the commandments from the hands of God, they were not obliged to believe him, because they had no other authority for it than his telling them so; and I have no other authority for it than some historian telling me so. The commandments carry no internal evidence of divinity with them; they contain some good moral precepts,

such as any man qualified to be a lawgiver, or a legislator, could produce himself, without having recourse to supernatural intervention*.

"When I am told that the Koran was written in Heaven and brought to Mahomet by an angel, the account comes to near the same kind of hearsay evidence and second-hand authority as the former. I did not see the angel myself, and, therefore, I have a right not to believe it.

"When also I am told that a woman, called the Virgin Mary, said, or gave out, that she was with child without any cohabitation with a man, and that her betrothed husband, Joseph, said, that an angel told him so, I have a right to believe them or not; such a circumstance required a much stronger evidence than their bare word for it; but we have not even this—for neither Joseph nor Mary wrote any such matter themselves; it is only reported by others that *they said so*—it is hearsay upon hearsay, and I do not choose to rest my belief upon such evidence.

"It is, however, not difficult to account for the credit that was given to the story of Jesus Christ being the son of God. He was born when the heathen mythology had still some fashion and repute in the world, and that mythology had prepared the people for the belief of such a story. Almost all the extraordinary men that lived under the heathen mythology were reputed to be sons of some of their gods. It was not a new thing, at that time, to believe a man to have been celestially begotten; the intercourse of gods with women was then a matter of familiar opinion. Their Jupiter, according to their accounts, had cohabited with hundreds; the story, therefore, had nothing in it either new, wonderful, or obscene; it was conformable to the opinions that then prevailed among the people called Gentiles, or Mythologists, and it was those people only that believed it. The Jews, who had kept strictly to the belief of one God, and no more, and who had always rejected the heathen mythology, never credited the story.

"It is curious to observe how the theory of what is called the Christian church, sprung out of the tail of the heathen mythology. A direct incorporation took place in the first instance, by making the reputed founder to be celestially begotten. The trinity of gods that then followed, was no other than a reduction of the former plurality, which was about twenty or thirty thousand; the statue of Mary succeeded the statue of Diana of Ephesus; the deification of heroes changed into the canonization of saints; the Mythologists had gods for every thing; the Christian Mythologists had saints for every thing; the church became as crowded with the one, as the pantheon had been with the other; and Rome was the place of both. The Christian theory is little else than the idolatry of the ancient Mythologists, accommodated to the purposes of power and revenue; and it yet remains to reason and philosophy to abolish the amphibious fraud.

* "It is, however, necessary to except the declaration which says that God *visits the sins of the fathers upon the children*; it is contrary to every principle of moral justice."

“ Nothing that is here said can apply, even with the most distant disrespect, to the *real* character of Jesus Christ. He was a virtuous and an amiable man. The morality that he preached and practised was of the most benevolent kind ; and though similar systems of morality had been preached by Confucius, and by some of the Greek philosophers, many years before ; by the Quakers since ; and by many good men in all ages, it has not been exceeded by any.

“ Jesus Christ wrote no account of himself, of his birth, parentage, or any thing else ; not a line of what is called the New Testament is of his own writing. The history of him is altogether the work of other people ; and as to the account given of his resurrection and ascension, it was the necessary counterpart to the story of his birth. His historians, having brought him into the world in a supernatural manner, were obliged to take him out again in the same manner, or the first part of the story must have fallen to the ground.

“ The wretched contrivance with which this latter part is told, exceeds every thing that went before it. The first part, that of the miraculous conception, was not a thing that admitted of publicity ; and therefore the tellers of this part of the story had this advantage, that though they might not be credited, they could not be detected. They could not be expected to prove it, because it was not one of those things that admitted of proof, and it was impossible that the person of whom it was told could prove it himself.”

Gentlemen, the language of Mr. Paine speaks for itself. It has no immoral tendency whatsoever, or when it may appear to have, it is only when he either cites, or refutes, something written by other authors.

“ But the resurrection of a dead person from the grave, and his ascension through the air, is a thing very different as to the evidence it admits of, to the invisible conception of a child in the womb. The resurrection and ascension, supposing them to have taken place, admitted of public and ocular demonstration, like that of the ascension of a balloon, or the sun at noon day, to all Jerusalem at least. A thing which every body is required to believe, requires that the proof and evidence of it should be equal to all, and universal ; and as the public visibility of this last related act was the only evidence that could give sanction to the former part, the whole of it falls to the ground, because that evidence never was given. Instead of this, a small number of persons, not more than eight or nine, are introduced as proxies for the whole world, to say they saw it, and all the rest of the world are called upon to believe it. But it appears that Thomas did not believe the resurrection ; and, as they say, would not believe without having ocular and manual demonstration himself. *So neither will I*, and the reason is equally as good for me, and for every other person, as for Thomas.

“ It is in vain to attempt to palliate or disguise this matter. The story, so far as relates to the supernatural part, has every mark of fraud and imposition stamped upon the face of it. Who were the

authors of it is as impossible for us now to know, as it is for us to be assured, that the books in which the account is related were written by the persons whose names they bear; the best surviving evidence we now have respecting this affair is the Jews. They are regularly descended from the people who lived in the times this resurrection and ascension is said to have happened, and they say, *it is not true*. It has long appeared to me a strange inconsistency to cite the Jews as a proof of the truth of the story. It is just the same as if a man were to say, I will prove the truth of what I have told you, by producing the people who say it is false.

“That such a person as Jesus Christ existed, and that he was crucified, which was the mode of execution at that day, are historical relations strictly within the limits of probability. He preached most excellent morality, and the equality of man; but he preached also against the corruptions and avarice of the Jewish priests, and this brought upon him the hatred and vengeance of the whole order of priesthood. The accusation which those priests brought against him, was that of sedition and conspiracy against the Roman government, to which the Jews were then subject and tributary; and it is not improbable that the Roman government might have some secret apprehension of the effects of his doctrine as well as the Jewish priests; neither is it improbable that Jesus Christ had in contemplation the delivery of the Jewish nation from the bondage of the Romans. Between the two, however, this virtuous reformer and revolutionist lost his life.

“It is upon this plain narrative of facts; together with another case I am going to mention, that the Christian Mythologists, calling themselves the Christian Church, have erected their fable, which for absurdity and extravagance is not exceeded by any thing that is to be found in the mythology of the ancients.

“The ancient Mythologists tell us that the race of Giants made war against Jupiter, and that one of them threw an hundred rocks against him at one throw; that Jupiter defeated him with thunder, and confined him afterwards under Mount Etna, and that every time the Giant turns himself, Mount Etna belches fire. It is here easy to see that the circumstance of the mountain, that of its being a volcano, suggested the idea of the fable; and that the fable is made to fit and wind itself up with that circumstance.

“The Christian Mythologists tell us, that their Satan made war against the Almighty, who defeated him, and confined him afterwards, not under a mountain, but in a pit. It is here easy to see that the first fable suggested the idea of the second; for the fable of Jupiter and the Giants was told many hundred years before that of Satan.

“Thus far the ancient and the Christian Mythologists differ very little from each other. But the latter have contrived to carry the matter much farther. They have contrived to connect the fabulous part of the story of Jesus Christ with the fable originating from Mount Etna; and, in order to make all the parts of the story tie

together, they have taken to their aid the traditions of the Jews ; for the Christian mythology is made up partly from the ancient mythology, and partly from the Jewish traditions.

"The Christian Mythologists, after having confined Satan in a pit, were obliged to let him out again, to bring on the sequel of the fable. He is then introduced into the Garden of Eden in the shape of a snake or a serpent, and in that shape he enters into familiar conversation with Eve, who is no way surprised to hear a snake talk ; and the issue of this tête-à-tête is, that he persuades her to eat an apple, and the eating of that apple damns all mankind.

"After giving Satan this triumph over the whole creation, one would have supposed that the church Mythologists would have been kind enough to send him back again to the pit ; or, if they had not done this, that they would have put a mountain upon him (for they say that their faith can remove a mountain) or have put him *under* a mountain, as the former Mythologists had done, to prevent his getting again among the women, and doing more mischief. But instead of this, they leave him at large, without even obliging him to give his parole—the secret of which is, that they could not do without him ; and after being at the trouble of making him, they bribed him to stay. They promised him ALL the Jews, ALL the Turks by anticipation, nine-tenths of the world beside, and Mahomet into the bargain. After this, who can doubt the bountifulness of the Christian mythology ?

"Having thus made an Insurrection and a battle in Heaven, in which none of the combatants could be either killed or wounded—put Satan into the pit—let him out again—given him a triumph over the whole creation—damned all mankind by the eating of an apple, these Christian Mythologists bring the two ends of their fable together. They represent this virtuous and amiable man, Jesus Christ, to be at once both God and Man, and also the Son of God, celestially begotten, on purpose to be sacrificed, because they say that Eve in her longing had eaten an apple.

"Putting aside every thing that might excite laughter by its absurdity, or detestation by its profaneness, and confining ourselves merely to an examination of the parts, it is impossible to conceive a story more derogatory to the Almighty, more inconsistent with his wisdom, more contradictory to his power, than this story is.

"In order to make for it a foundation to rise upon, the inventors were under the necessity of giving to the being, whom they call Satan, a power equally as great, if not greater, than they attribute to the Almighty. They have not only given him the power of liberating himself from the pit, after what they call his fall, but they have made that power increase afterwards to infinity. Before this fall they represent him only as an angel of limited existence, as they represent the rest. After his fall, he becomes, by their account, omnipresent. He exists everywhere, and at the same time. He occupies the whole immensity of space.

"Not content with the deification of Satan, they represent him as

defeating, by stratagem, in the shape of an animal of the creation, all the power and wisdom of the Almighty. They represent him as having compelled the Almighty to the *direct necessity* either of surrendering the whole of the creation to the government and sovereignty of this Satan, or of capitulating for its redemption by coming down upon earth, and exhibiting himself upon a cross in the shape of a man.

“Had the inventors of this story told it the contrary way, that is, had they represented the Almighty as compelling Satan to exhibit *himself* on a cross, in the shape of a snake, as a punishment for his new transgression, the story would have been less absurd—less contradictory. But instead of this, they make the transgressor triumph, and the Almighty fall.

“That many good men have believed this strange fable, and lived very good lives under that belief (for credulity is not a crime) is what I have no doubt of. In the first place, they were educated to believe it, and they would have believed any thing else in the same manner. There are also many who have been so enthusiastically enraptured by what they conceived to be the infinite love of God to man, in making a sacrifice of himself, that the vehemence of the idea has forbidden and deterred them from examining into the absurdity and profaneness of the story. The more unnatural any thing is, the more is it capable of becoming the object of dismal admiration.

“But if objects for gratitude and admiration are our desire, do they not present themselves every hour to our eyes? Do we not see a fair creation prepared to receive us the instant we are born—a world furnished to our hands, that cost us nothing? Is it we that light up the sun, that pour down the rain, and fill the earth with abundance? Whether we sleep or wake, the vast machinery of the universe still goes on. Are these things, and the blessings they indicate in future, nothing to us? Can our gross feelings be excited by no other subjects than tragedy and suicide? Or is the gloomy pride of man become so intolerable, that nothing can flatter it but a sacrifice of the Creator?

“I know that this bold investigation will alarm many, but it would be paying too great a compliment to their credulity to forbear it upon that account; the times and the subject demand it to be done. The suspicion that the theory of what is called the Christian church is fabulous, is becoming very extensive in all countries; and it will be a consolation to men staggering under that suspicion, and doubting what to believe and what to disbelieve, to see the subject freely investigated. I therefore pass on to an examination of the books, called the Old and New Testament.

“These books, beginning with Genesis and ending with Revelation, (which, by the bye, is a book of riddles that requires a revelation to explain it) are, we are told, the word of God. It is, therefore, proper for us to know who told us so, that we may know what credit to give to the report. The answer to this question is, that nobody can

tell, except that we tell one another so. The case, however, historically appears to be as follows:—

“ When the church Mythologists established their system, they collected all the writings they could find, and managed them as they pleased. It is a matter altogether of uncertainty to us whether such of the writings as now appear under the name of the Old and New Testament, are in the same state in which those collectors say they found them, or whether they added, altered, abridged, or dressed them up.

“ Be this as it may, they decided by *vote* which of the books out of the collection they had made, should be the **WORD OF GOD**, and which should not. They rejected several; they voted others to be doubtful, such as the books called the Apocrypha; and those books which had a majority of votes, were voted to be the word of God. Had they voted otherwise, all the people, since calling themselves Christians, had believed otherwise—for the belief of the one comes from the vote of the other. Who the people were that did all this, we know nothing of, they called themselves by the general name of the Church; and this is all we know of the matter.

“ As we have no other external evidence or authority for believing those books to be the word of God, than what I have mentioned, which is no evidence or authority at all, I come, in the next place, to examine the internal evidence contained in the books themselves.

“ In the former part of this Essay I have spoken of revelation. I now proceed further with that subject, for the purpose of applying it to the books in question.

“ Revelation is a communication of something, which the person to whom that thing is revealed, did not know before. For if I have done a thing, or seen it done, it needs no revelation to tell me I have done it, or seen it, nor to enable me to tell it, or to write it.

“ Revelation, therefore, cannot be applied to any thing done upon earth, of which man is himself the actor or the witness; and consequently all the historical and anecdotal part of the Bible, which is almost the whole of it, is not within the meaning and compass of the word revelation, and therefore is not the word of God.

“ When Sampson ran off with the gate-posts of Gaza, if he ever did so (and whether he did or not is nothing to us) or when he visited his Delilah, or caught his foxes, or did any thing else, what has revelation to do with these things? If they were facts, he could tell them himself; or his secretary, if he kept one, could write them, if they were worth either telling or writing; and if they were fictions, revelation could not make them true; and whether true or not, we are neither the better nor the wiser for knowing them. When we contemplate the immensity of that Being, who directs and governs the incomprehensible **WHOLE**, of which the utmost ken of human sight can discover but a part, we ought to feel shame at calling such paltry stories the word of God.

“ As to the account of the Creation, with which the book of Genesis opens, it has all the appearance of being a tradition which the

Israelites had among them before they came into Egypt; and after their departure from that country, they put it at the head of their history, without telling (as it is most probable) that they did not know how they came by it. The manner in which the account opens, shews it to be traditionary. It begins abruptly: it is nobody that speaks; it is nobody that hears; it is addressed to nobody; it has neither first, second, or third person; it has every criterion of being a tradition; it has no voucher. Moses does not take it upon himself by introducing it with the formality that he uses on other occasions, such as that of saying, "*The Lord spake unto Moses, saying.*"

"Why it has been called the Mosaic account of the Creation, I am at a loss to conceive. Moses, I believe, was too good a judge of such subjects to put his name to that account. He had been educated among the Egyptians, who were a people as well skilled in science, and particularly in astronomy, as any people of their day; and the silence and caution that Moses observes, in not authenticating the account, is a good negative evidence that he neither told it nor believed it. The case is, that every nation of people has been world-makers, and the Israelites had as much right to set up the trade of world-making as any of the rest; and as Moses was not an Israelite, he might not choose to contradict the tradition. The account, however, is harmless; and this is more than can be said for many other parts of the Bible.

"Whenever we read the obscene stories, the voluptuous debaucheries, the cruel and torturous executions, the unrelenting vindictiveness, with which more than half the Bible is filled, it would be more consistent that we called it the word of a Demon, than the word of God. It is a history of wickedness, that has served to corrupt and brutalize mankind; and, for my own part, I sincerely detest it as I detest every thing that is cruel."

As Mr. Carlile had concluded this paragraph, which was one of those cited by the Attorney-General, several of the Jury expressed a wish for copies of the work, which were immediately handed up to them. Mr. Carlile read the extract again, and said, Now, Gentlemen, I beg to ask you,—I appeal to you as conscientious men to say, if it was fair to have omitted the last member of the sentence, on a part of which so great a stress has been laid by the Attorney-General? Gentlemen, was it fair in him to have given the beginning, without also giving the conclusion of the paragraph? The conclusion of the paragraph is most important in its nature, for it says, *and, for my own part, I most sincerely detest it, as I detest every thing that is cruel.* Why then should that conclusion have been left out, if it were not intended to have excited any possible prejudice against me? Gentlemen, you will, however, bear the circumstance in

your recollection, and you will also perceive that there is not a single sentiment of Mr. Paine's which can be charged with having an immoral tendency.

"We scarcely meet with any thing, a few phrases excepted, but what deserves either our abhorrence or our contempt, till we come to the miscellaneous parts of the Bible. In the anonymous publications, the Psalms, and the Book of Job, more particularly in the latter, we find a great deal of elevated sentiment reverentially expressed of the power and benignity of the Almighty; but they stand on no higher rank than many other compositions on similar subjects, as well before that time as since.

"The Proverbs which are said to be Solomon's, though most probably a collection, (because they discover a knowledge of life, which his situation excluded him from knowing) are an instructive table of ethics. They are inferior in keenness to the proverbs of the Spaniards, and not more wise and economical than those of the American Franklin.

"All the remaining parts of the Bible, generally known by the name of the Prophets, are the works of the Jewish poets and itinerant preachers, who mixed poetry, anecdote, and devotion together; and those works still retain the air and style of poetry, though in translation.*

"There is not, throughout the whole book called the Bible, any word that describes to us what we call a poet, nor any word that describes what we call poetry. The case is, that the word *prophet*, to which latter times have affixed a new idea, was the Bible word for poet, and the word *prophesying* meant the art of making poetry. It also meant the art of playing poetry to a tune upon any instrument of music.

"We read of prophesying with pipes, tabrets, and horns—of prophesying with harps, with psalteries, with cymbals, and with every other instrument of music then in fashion. Were we now to speak of prophesying with a fiddle, or with a pipe and tabor, the expression would have no meaning, or would appear ridiculous, and to some people contemptuous, because we have changed the meaning of the word.

"We are told of Saul being among the *prophets*, and also that he prophesied; but we are not told what *they prophesied* nor what *he*

* As there are many readers who do not see that a composition is poetry, unless it be in rhyme, it is for their information that I add this note.

Poetry consists principally in two things—imagery and composition. The composition of poetry differs from that of prose in the manner of mixing long and short syllables together. Take a long syllable out of a line of poetry, and put a short one in the room of it, or put a long syllable where a short one should be, and that line will lose its poetical harmony. It will have an effect upon the fine like that of misplacing a note in a song.

The imagery in those books, called the prophets, appertains altogether to poetry. It is fictitious, and often extravagant, and not admissible in any other kind of writing than poetry

prophesied. The case is, there was nothing to tell; for these prophets were a company of musicians and poets, and Saul joined in the concert, and this was called *prophesying*.

"The account given of this affair, in the book called Samuel, is, that Saul met a *company* of prophets; a whole company of them! coming down with a psaltery, a tabret, a pipe, and a harp, and that they prophesied, and that he prophesied with them. But it appears afterwards, that Saul prophesied badly, that is, he performed his part badly; for it is said, that an "*evil spirit from God*"* came upon Saul, and he prophesied.

"Now, were there no other passage in the book, called the Bible, than this, to demonstrate to us that we have lost the original meaning of the word *prophecy*, and substituted another meaning in its place, this alone would be sufficient; for it is impossible to use and apply the word *prophecy*, in the place it is here used and applied, if we give to it the sense which latter times have affixed to it. The manner in which it is here used strips it of all religious meaning, and shews that a man might then be a prophet, or might *prophecy*, as he may now be a poet or a musician, without any regard to the morality or the immorality of his character. The word was originally a term of science, promiscuously applied to poetry and to music, and not restricted to any subject upon which poetry and music might be exercised.

"Deborah and Barak are called prophets, not because they predicted any thing, but because they composed the poem or song that bears their name, in celebration of an act already done. David is ranked among the prophets, for he was a musician, and was also reputed to be (though perhaps very erroneously) the author of the Psalms. But Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are not called prophets; it does not appear from any accounts we have that they could either sing, play music, or make poetry.

"We are told of the greater and the lesser prophets. They might as well tell us of the greater and the lesser God; for there cannot be degrees in prophesying, consistently with its modern sense. But there are degrees in poetry, and therefore the phrase is reconcilable to the case, when we understand by it the greater and the lesser poets.

"It is altogether unnecessary, after this, to offer any observations upon what those men, styled prophets, have written. The axe goes at once to the root, by shewing that the original meaning of the word has been mistaken, and consequently all the inferences that have been drawn from those books, the devotional respect that has been paid to them, and the laboured commentaries that have been written upon them, under that mistaken meaning, are not worth disputing

* "As those men who call themselves divines and commentators, are very fond of puzzling one another, I leave them to contest the meaning of the first part of the phrase, that of *an evil spirit of God*. I keep to my text---I keep to the meaning of the word prophecy.

about.—In many things, however, the writings of the Jewish poets deserve a better fate than that of being bound up, as they now are, with the trash that accompanies them, under the abused name of the word of God.

“ If we permit ourselves to conceive right ideas of things, we must necessarily affix the idea, not only of unchangeableness, but of the utter impossibility of any change taking place, by any means or accident whatever, in that which we would honour with the name of the word of God ; and therefore the word of God cannot exist in any written or human language.

“ The continually progressive change to which the meaning of words is subject, the want of an universal language which renders translation necessary, the errors to which translations are again subject, the mistakes of copyists and printers, together with the possibility of wilful alteration, are of themselves evidences that human language, whether in speech or in print, cannot be the vehicle of the word of God.—The word of God exists in something else.

“ Did the book, called the Bible, excel in purity of ideas and expression all the books that are now extant in the world, I would not take it for my rule of faith, as being the word of God, because the possibility would nevertheless exist of my being imposed upon. But when I see, throughout the greatest part of this book, scarcely any thing but a history of the grossest vices, and a collection of the most paltry and contemptible tales, I cannot dishonour my Creator by calling it by his name.”

This passage, Gentlemen, is also inserted in the charge against me, and the Attorney-General has laid great stress, indeed, upon it; as if Mr. Paine had totally denied the existence of any thing like morality in the Bible. Mr. Paine, however, did no such thing. He said, there were, amongst many bad things, some excellent things also scattered up and down; but, that being composed of such a mixture, it was for him to believe, or disbelieve it, as he thought proper.

“ Thus much for the Bible ; I now go on to the book called the New Testament. The *New Testament* ! that is, the *new will*, as if there could be two wills of the Creator.

“ Had it been the object or the intention of Jesus Christ to establish a new religion, he would undoubtedly have written the system himself, or *procured it to be written* in his life time. But there is no publication extant authenticated with his name. All the books called the New Testament were written after his death. He was a Jew by birth and by profession ; and he was the Son of God in like manner that every other person is—for the Creator is the Father of All.

“ The first four books, called Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, do not give a history of the life of Jesus Christ, but only detached anecdotes of him. It appears from these books, that the whole time of

his being a preacher was not more than eighteen months; and it was only during this short time that those men became acquainted with him. They make mention of him at the age of twelve years, sitting, they say, among the Jewish doctors, asking and answering them questions. As this was several years before their acquaintance with him began, it is most probable they had this anecdote from his parents. From this time there is no account of him for about sixteen years. Where he lived, or how he employed himself, during this interval, is not known. Most probably he was working at his father's trade, which was that of a carpenter. It does not appear that he had any school education, and the probability is, that he could not write, for his parents were extremely poor, as appears from their not being able to pay for a bed when he was born.

"It is somewhat curious that the three persons whose names are the most universally recorded, were of very obscure parentage. Moses was a foundling; Jesus Christ was born in a stable; and Mahomet was a mule driver. The first and the last of these men were founders of different systems of religion; but Jesus Christ founded no new system. He called men to the practice of moral virtues, and the belief of one God. The great trait in his character is philanthropy.

"The manner in which he was apprehended, shews that he was not much known at that time; and it shews also, that the meetings he then held with his followers were in secret; and that he had given over or suspended preaching publicly. Judas could no otherwise betray him than by giving information where he was, and pointing him out to the officers that went to arrest him; and the reason for employing and paying Judas to do this could arise only from the causes already mentioned, that of his not being much known, and living concealed.

"The idea of his concealment, not only agrees very ill with his reputed divinity, but associates with it something of pusillanimity; and his being betrayed, or, in other words, his being apprehended, on the information of one of his followers, shews that he did not intend to be apprehended, and, consequently, that he did not intend to be crucified.

"The Christian Mythologists tell us, that Christ died for the sins of the world, and that he came on *purpose to die*. Would it not then have been the same if he had died of a fever or of the small-pox, of old age, or of any thing else?

"The declaratory sentence which, they say, was passed upon Adam, in case he eat of the apple, was not, that *thou shalt surely be crucified, but thou shalt surely die*—the sentence of death, and not the manner of dying. Crucifixion, therefore, or any other particular manner of dying, made no part of the sentence that Adam was to suffer, and, consequently, even upon their own tactics, it could make no part of the sentence that Christ was to suffer in the room of Adam. A fever would have done as well as a cross, if there was any occasion for either.

“ This sentence of death, which they tell us, was thus passed upon Adam, must either have meant dying naturally, that is, ceasing to live, or have meant what these Mythologists call damnation ; and, consequently, the act of dying on the part of Jesus Christ, must, according to their system, apply as a prevention to one or other of these two *things* happening to Adam and to us.

“ That it does not prevent our dying is evident, because we all die ; and if their accounts of longevity be true, men die faster since the crucifixion than before ; and with respect to the second explanation, (including with it the *natural death* of Jesus Christ as a substitute for the *eternal death or damnation* of all mankind) it is impertinently representing the Creator as coming off, or revoking the sentence, by a pun or a quibble upon the word *death*. That manufacturer of quibbles, St. Paul, if he wrote the books that bear his name, has helped this quibble on by making another quibble upon the word *Adam*. He makes there to be two Adams ; the one who sins in fact, and suffers by proxy ; the other who sins by proxy, and suffers in fact. A religion thus interlarded with quibble, subterfuge, and pun, has a tendency to instruct its professors in the practice of these arts. They acquire the habit without being aware of the causes.

“ If Jesus Christ was the being which those Mythologists tell us he was, and that he came into this world to *suffer*, which is a word they sometimes use instead of *to die*, the only real suffering he could have endured, would have been *to live*. His existence here was a state of exilement or transportation from Heaven, and the way back to his original country was to die.—In fine, every thing in this strange system is the reverse of what it pretends to be. It is the reverse of truth, and I become so tired with examining into its inconsistencies and absurdities, that I hasten to the conclusion of it, in order to proceed to something better.

“ How much, or what parts of the books called the New Testament, were written by the persons whose names they bear, is what we can know nothing of, neither are we certain in what language they were originally written. The matters they now contain may be classed under two heads—*anecdote* and *epistolary correspondence*.

“ The four books already mentioned, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, are altogether anecdotal. They relate events after they had taken place. They tell what Jesus Christ did and said, and what others did and said to him ; and in several instances they relate the same event differently. Revelation is necessarily out of the question with respect to those books ; not only because of the disagreement of the writers, but because revelation cannot be applied to the relating of facts by the persons who saw them done, nor to the relating or recording of any discourse or conversation by those who heard it. The book called the Acts of the Apostles (an anonymous work) belongs also to the anecdotal part.

“ All the other parts of the New Testament, except the book of enigmas, called the Revelations, are a collection of letters under the name of epistles ; and the forgery of letters has been such a com-

mon practice in the world, that the probability is at least equal, whether they are genuine or forged. One thing, however, is much less equivocal, which is, that out of the matters contained in those books, together with the assistance of some old stories, the church has set up a system of religion very contradictory to the character of the person whose name it bears. It has set up a religion of pomp and of revenue, in pretended imitation of a person whose life was humility and poverty.

“The invention of purgatory, and of the releasing of souls therefrom, by prayers, bought of the church with money; the selling of pardons, dispensations, and indulgencies, are revenue laws, without bearing that name or carrying that appearance. But the case nevertheless is, that those things derive their origin from the paroxysms of the crucifixion and the theory deduced therefrom, which was, that one person could stand in the place of another, and could perform meritorious services for him. The probability, therefore, is, that the whole theory or doctrine of what is called the redemption (which is said to have been accomplished by the act of one person in the room of another) was originally fabricated on purpose to bring forward and build all those secondary and pecuniary redemptions upon; and that the passages in the books upon which the idea of theory of redemption is built, have been manufactured and fabricated for that purpose. Why are we to give this church credit, when she tells us that those books are genuine in every part, any more than we give her credit for every thing else she has told us; or for the miracles she says she has performed? That she *could* fabricate writings is certain, because she could write; and the composition of the writings in question, is of that kind that any body might do it; and that she *did* fabricate them is not more inconsistent with probability, than that she should tell us, as she has done, that she could and did work miracles.

“Since then no external evidence can, at this long distance of time, be produced to prove whether the church fabricated the doctrines called redemption or not, (for such evidence, whether for or against, would be subject to the same suspicion of being fabricated) the case can only be referred to the internal evidence which the thing carries of itself; and this affords a very strong presumption of its being a fabrication. For the internal evidence is, that the theory or doctrine of redemption has for its basis an idea of pecuniary justice, and not that of moral justice.

“If I owe a person money, and cannot pay him, and he threatens to put me in prison, another person can take the debt upon himself, and pay it for me; but if I have committed a crime, every circumstance of the case is changed, moral justice cannot take the innocent for the guilty, even if the innocent would offer itself. To suppose justice to do this, is to destroy the principle of its existence, which is the thing itself; it is then no longer justice it is indiscriminate revenge.

“This single reflection will shew that the doctrine of redemption is

founded on a mere pecuniary idea, which another person might pay ; and as this pecuniary idea corresponds again with the system of second redemptions, obtained through the means of money given to the church for pardons, the probability is, that the same persons fabricated both the one and the other of those theories ; and that, in truth, there is no such thing as redemption ; that it is fabulous, and that man stands in the same relative condition with his Maker he ever did stand, since man existed, and that it is his greatest consolation to think so.

“ Let him believe this, and he will live more consistently and morally than by any other system ; it is by his being taught to contemplate himself as an out-law, as an out-cast, as a beggar, as a mumper, as one thrown, as it were, on a dunghill, at an immense distance from his Creator, and who must make his approaches by creeping and cringing to intermediate beings, that he conceives either a contemptuous disregard for every thing under the name of religion, or becomes indifferent, or turns, what he calls, devout. In the latter case, he consumes his life in grief, or the affectation of it ; his prayers are reproaches ; his humility is ingratitude ; he calls himself a worm, and the fertile earth a dunghill ; and all the blessings of life, by the thankless name of vanities ; he despises the choicest gift of God to man, the GIFT OF REASON ; and having endeavoured to force upon himself the belief of a system against which reason revolts, he ungratefully calls it *human reason*, as if man could give reason to himself.

“ Yet, with all this strange appearance of humility, and this contempt for human reason, he ventures into the boldest presumptions ; he finds fault with every thing ; his selfishness is never satisfied ; his ingratitude is never at an end. He takes on himself to direct the Almighty what to do, even in the government of the universe ; he prays dictatorially ; when it is sun-shine, he prays for rain, and when it is rain, he prays for sun-shine ; he follows the same idea in every thing that he prays for ; for what is the amount of all his prayers, but an attempt to make the Almighty change his mind, and act otherwise than he does ? It is as if he were to say—thou knowest not so well as I.

“ But some perhaps will say, Are we to have no word of God—No revelation ? I answer, Yes : there is a word of God ; there is a revelation.

“ THE WORD OF GOD, IS THE CREATION WE BEHOLD : And it is in *this word*, which no human invention can counterfeit or alter, that God speaketh universally to man.

“ Human language is local and changeable, and is therefore incapable of being used as the means of unchangeable and universal information. The idea that God sent Jesus Christ to publish, as they say, the glad tidings to all nations, from one end of the earth to the other, is consistent only with the ignorance of those who knew nothing of the extent of the world, and who believed, as those world-saviours believed, and continued to believe, for several centuries,

(and that in contradiction to the discoveries of philosophers, and the experience of navigators) that the earth was flat like a trencher, and that a man might walk to the end of it.

“ But how was Jesus Christ to make any thing known to all nations? He could speak but one language, which was Hebrew; and there are in the world several hundred languages. Scarcely any two nations speak the same language, or understand each other: and as to translations, every man who knows any thing of languages, knows that it is impossible to translate from one language to another, not only without losing a great part of the original, but frequently of mistaking the sense; and besides all this, the art of printing was wholly unknown at the time Christ lived.

“ It is always necessary that the means that are to accomplish any end, be equal to the accomplishment of that end, or the end cannot be accomplished. It is in this, that the difference between finite and infinite power and wisdom discovers itself. Man frequently fails in accomplishing his ends, from a natural inability of the power to the purpose; and frequently from the want of wisdom to apply power properly. But it is impossible for infinite power and wisdom to fail as man faileth. The means it useth are always equal to the end; but human language, more especially as there is not an universal language, is incapable of being used as an universal means of unchangeable and uniform information, and therefore it is not the means that God useth in manifesting himself universally to man.

“ It is only in the CREATION that all our ideas and conceptions of a *word of God* can unite. The Creation speaketh an universal language, independently of human speech or human language, multiplied and various as they be. It is an ever-existing original, which every man can read. It cannot be forged; it cannot be counterfeited; it cannot be lost; it cannot be altered; it cannot be suppressed. It does not depend upon the will of man whether it shall be published or not; it publishes itself from one end of the earth to the other. It preaches to all nations and to all worlds; and this *word of God* reveals to man all that is necessary for man to know of God.

“ Do we want to contemplate his power? We see it in the immensity of the Creation. Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? We see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed. Do we want to contemplate his munificence? We see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth. Do we want to contemplate his mercy? We see it in his not withholding that abundance even from the unthankful. In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search not the book called the Scripture, which any human hand might make, but the Scripture called the Creation.”

Why has not the Attorney-General prosecuted me for publishing this? Does this refute his charges against me and Mr. Paine? Gentlemen of the Jury, you will perceive from this, and other passages as I proceed to read the Age of

Reason, that it does not contain those offensive sentiments, on which the Attorney-General has so much dilated.

“ The only idea man can affix to the name of God, is that of a *first cause*, the cause of all things. And incomprehensible and difficult as it is for a man to conceive what a first cause is, he arrives at the belief of it, from the tenfold greater difficulty of disbelieving it. It is difficult beyond description to conceive that space can have no end ; but it is more difficult to conceive an end. It is difficult beyond the power of man to conceive an eternal duration of what we call time ; but it is more impossible to conceive a time when there shall be no time. In like manner of reasoning, every thing we behold carries in itself the internal evidence that it did not make itself. Every man is an evidence to himself, that he did not make himself ; neither could his father make himself, nor his grandfather, nor any of his race ; neither could any tree, plant, or animal make itself ; and it is the conviction arising from this evidence, that carries us on, as it were, by necessity, to the belief of a first cause eternally existing, of a nature totally different to any material existence we know of, and by the power of which all things exist ; and this first cause man calls God.

“ It is only by the exercise of reason, that man can discover God. Take away that reason, and he would be incapable of understanding any thing ; and, in this case, it would be just as consistent to read even the book called the Bible to a horse as to a man. How then is it that those people pretend to reject reason ?

“ Almost the only parts in the book called the Bible, that convey us to any idea of God, are some chapters in Job, and the 19th Psalm ; I recollect no other. Those parts are true *deistical* compositions ; for they treat of the *Deity* through his works. They take the book of Creation as the word of God, they refer to no other book, and all the inferences they make are drawn from that volume.

“ I insert, in this place, the 19th Psalm, as paraphrased into English verse by Addison. I recollect not the prose, and where I write this I have not the opportunity of seeing it.

“ The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue ethereal sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim.
The unwearied sun, from day to day,
Does his Creator's power display,
And publishes to every land,
The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
And nightly to the list'ning earth
Repeats the story of her birth ;
Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball ;
What though no real voice, nor sound,
Amidst their radiant orbs be found.
In Reason's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever singing as they shine,
THE HAND THAT MADE US IS DIVINE."

"What more does man want to know than that the hand, of power, that made these things is divine, is omnipotent? Let him believe this with the force it is impossible to repel, if he permits his reason to act, and his rule of moral life will follow of course.

"The allusions in Job have all of them the same tendency with this Psalm: that of deducing or proving a truth, that would be otherwise unknown, from truths already known.

"I recollect not enough of the passages in Job, to insert them correctly: but there is one occurs to me that is applicable to the subject I am speaking upon. "Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection?"

"I know not how the printers have pointed this passage, for I keep no Bible; but it contains two distinct questions, that admit of distinct answers.

"First—Canst thou by searching find out God? Yes: because in the first place, I know I did not make myself, and yet I have existence; and by *searching* into the nature of other things, I find that no other thing could make itself; and yet millions of other things exist; therefore it is, that I know, by positive conclusion resulting from this search, that there is a power superior to all those things, and that power is God.

"Secondly—Canst thou find out the Almighty to *perfection*? No; not only because the power and wisdom He has manifested in the structure of the Creation that I behold, is to me incomprehensible, but because even this manifestation, great as it is, is probably but a small display of that immensity of power and wisdom, by which millions of other worlds, to me invisible by their distance, were created and continue to exist.

"It is evident, that both these questions were put to the reason of the person to whom they are supposed to have been addressed; and it is only by admitting the first question to be answered affirmatively, that the second could follow. It would have been unnecessary, and even absurd, to have put a second question, more difficult than the first, if the first question had been answered negatively. The two questions have different objects; the first refers to the existence of God, the second to his attributes; reason can discover the one, but it falls infinitely short in discovering the whole of the other.

"I recollect not a single passage in all the writings ascribed to the men called apostles, that convey any idea of what God is. Those writings are chiefly controversial; and the subject they dwell upon, that of a man dying in agony on a cross, is better suited to

the gloomy genius of a monk in a cell, by whom it is not impossible they were written, than to any man breathing the open air of the Creation. The only passage that occurs to me, that has any reference to the works of God, by which only his power and wisdom can be known, is related to have been spoken by Jesus Christ, as a remedy against distrustful care. "Behold the lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin." This, however, is far inferior to the allusions in Job, and in the 19th Psalm; but it is similar in idea, and the modesty of the imagery is correspondent to the modesty of the man.

"As to the Christian system of faith, it appears to me as a species of atheism—a sort of religious denial of God. It professes to believe in a man rather than in God. It is a compound made up chiefly of manism with but little deism, and is as near to atheism as twilight is to darkness. It introduces between man and his Maker an opaque body, which it calls a Redeemer, as the moon introduces her opaque self between the earth and sun, and it produces by this means a religious or an irreligious eclipse of light. It has put the whole orbit of reason into shade.

"The effect of this obscurity has been that of turning every thing upside down, and representing it in reverse; and among the revolutions it has thus magically produced, it has made a revolution in Theology.

"That which is now called natural philosophy, embracing the whole circle of science, of which Astronomy occupies the chief place, is the study of the works of God, and of the power and wisdom of God in his works, and is the true theology.

"As to the theology that is now studied in its place, it is the study of human opinions, and of human fancies *concerning* God. It is not the study of God himself in the works that he has made, but in the works or writings that man has made; and it is not among the least of the mischiefs that the Christian system has done to the world, that it has abandoned the original and beautiful system of theology, like a beautiful innocent, to distress and reproach, to make room for the hag of superstition.

"The book of Job, and the 19th Psalm, which even the church admits to be more ancient than the chronological order in which they stand in the book called the Bible, are theological orations conformable to the original system of theology. The internal evidence of those orations proves to a demonstration that the study and contemplation of the works of Creation, and of the power and wisdom of God, revealed and manifested in those works, made a great part of the religious devotion of the times in which they were written; and it was this devotional study and contemplation that led to the discovery of the principles upon which, what are now called Sciences, are established; and it is to the discovery of these principles that almost all the Arts that contribute to the convenience of human life, owe their existence. Every principal art has some science for its parent, though the person who mechani-

cally performs the work does not always, and but very seldom, perceive the connexion.

“ It is a fraud of the Christian system to call the sciences *human invention*; it is only the application of them that is human. Every science has for its basis a system of principles as fixed and unalterable as those by which the universe is regulated and governed. Man cannot make principles; he can only discover them:

“ For example—Every person who looks at an Almanack sees an account when an eclipse will take place, and he sees also that it never fails to take place according to the account there given. This shews that man is acquainted with the laws by which the heavenly bodies move. But it would be something worse than ignorance, were any church on earth to say, that those laws are an human invention. It would also be ignorance, or something worse, to say that the scientific principles, by the aid of which man is enabled to calculate and foreknow when an eclipse will take place, are an human invention. Man cannot invent any thing that is eternal and immutable; and the scientific principles he employs for this purpose must, and are, of necessity, as eternal and immutable as the laws by which the heavenly bodies move, or they could not be used as they are to ascertain the time when, and the manner how, an eclipse will take place.

“ The scientific principles that man employs to obtain the foreknowledge of an eclipse, or of any thing else, relating to the motion of the heavenly bodies, are contained chiefly in that part of science which is called Trigonometry, or the properties of a triangle, which when applied to the study of the heavenly bodies, is called Astronomy; when applied to direct the course of a ship on the ocean, it is called Navigation; when applied to the construction of figures drawn by rule and compass, it is called Geometry; when applied to the construction of plans of edifices, it is called Architecture; when applied to the measurement of any portion of the surface of the earth, it is called Land-surveying. In fine, it is the soul of science; it is an eternal truth; it contains the *mathematical demonstration* of which man speaks, and the extent of its uses is unknown.

“ It may be said, that man can make or draw a triangle, and therefore a triangle is an human invention.

“ But the triangle, when drawn, is no other than the image of the principle; it is a delineation to the eye, and from thence to the mind, of a principle that would otherwise be imperceptible. The triangle does not make the principle, any more than a candle taken into a room that was dark, makes the chairs and tables that before were invisible. All the properties of a triangle exist independently of the figure, and existed before any triangle was drawn or thought of by man. Man had no more to do in the formation of those properties or principles, than he had to do in making the laws by which the heavenly bodies move; and therefore the one must have the same divine origin as the other.

“ In the same manner as it may be said, that man can make a triangle, so also it may be said, he can make the mechanical instrument called a lever; but the principle, by which the lever acts, is a thing distinct from the instrument, and would exist if the instrument did not: it attaches itself to the instrument after it is made; the instrument, therefore, can act no otherwise than it does act; neither can all the efforts of human invention make it act otherwise. That which, in all such cases, man calls the *effect*, is no other than the principle itself rendered perceptible to the senses.

“ Since then man cannot make principles, from whence did he gain a knowledge of them, so as to be able to apply them, not only to things on earth, but to ascertain the motion of bodies so immensely distant from him as all the heavenly bodies are? From whence, I ask, *could* he gain that knowledge, but from the study of the true theology?

“ It is the structure of the universe that has taught this knowledge to man. That structure is an ever-existing exhibition of every principle upon which every part of mathematical science is founded. The offspring of this science is mechanics; for mechanics is no other than the principles of science applied practically. The man who proportions the several parts of a mill, uses the same scientific principles, as if he had the power of constructing an universe; but as he cannot give to matter that invisible agency, by which all the component parts of the immense machine of the universe have influence upon each other, and act in motional unison together, without any apparent contact, and to which man has given the name of attraction, gravitation, and repulsion, he supplies the place of that agency by the humble imitation of teeth and cogs. All the parts of man's microcosm must visibly touch; but could he gain a knowledge of that agency, so as to be able to apply it in practice, we might then say, that another *canonical book* of the word of God had been discovered.

“ If man could alter the properties of the lever, so also could he alter the properties of the triangle; for a lever (taking that sort of lever which is called a steel-yard, for the sake of explanation) forms, when in motion, a triangle. The line it descends from, (one point of that line being in the fulcrum) the line it descends to, and the cord of the arc, which the end of the lever describes in the air, are the three sides of a triangle. The other arm of the lever describes also a triangle; and the corresponding sides of those two triangles, calculated scientifically, or measured geometrically; and also the sines, tangents, and secants generated from the angles, and geometrically measured, have the same proportions to each other, as the different weights have that balance each other on the lever, leaving the weight of the lever out of the case.

“ It may also be said, that man can make a wheel and axis; that he can put wheels of different magnitudes together, and produce a mill. Still the case comes back to the same point, which

is, that he did not make the principle that gives the wheels those powers. That principle is as unalterable as in the former cases, or rather it is the same principle under a different appearance to the eye.

"The power that two wheels, of different magnitudes, have upon each other, is in the same proportion as if the semi-diameter of the two wheels were joined together and made into that kind of lever I have described, suspended at the part where the semi-diameters join; for the two wheels, scientifically considered, are no other than the two circles generated by the motion of the compound lever.

"It is from the study of the true theology that all our knowledge of science is derived, and it is from that knowledge that all the arts have originated.

"The Almighty lecturer, by displaying the principles of science in the structure of the universe, has invited man to study and imitation. It is as if he had said to the inhabitants of this globe, that we call ours, 'I have made an earth for man to dwell upon, and I have rendered the starry heavens visible, to teach him science and the arts. He can now provide for his own comfort, AND LEARN FROM MY MUNIFICENCE TO ALL, TO BE KIND TO EACH OTHER.'

"Of what use is it, unless it be to teach man something, that his eye is endowed with the power of beholding, to an incomprehensible distance, an immensity of worlds revolving in the ocean of space? Or of what use is it that this immensity of worlds is visible to man? What has man to do with the Pleiades, with Orion, with Sirius, with the star he calls the north star, with the moving orbs he has named Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, and Mercury, if no uses are to follow from their being visible? A less power of vision would have been sufficient for man, if the immensity he now possesses were given only to waste itself, as it were, on an immense desert of space glittering with shows.

"It is only by contemplating what he calls the starry heavens, as the book and school of science, that he discovers any use in their being visible to him, or any advantage resulting from his immensity of vision. But when he contemplates the subject in this light, he sees an additional motive for saying, that *nothing was made in vain*; for in vain would be this power of vision if it taught man nothing.

"As the Christian system of faith has made a revolution in theology, so also has it made a revolution in the state of learning. That which is now called learning was not learning originally. Learning does not consist, as the schools now make it consist, in the knowledge of languages, but in the knowledge of things to which language gives names.

"The Greeks were a learned people, but learning with them did not consist in speaking Greek, any more than in a Roman's speaking Latin, or a Frenchman's speaking French, or an Englishman's

speaking English. From what we know of the Greeks, it does not appear that they knew or studied any language but their own, and this was one cause of their becoming so learned; it afforded them more time to apply themselves to better studies. The schools of the Greeks were schools of science and philosophy, and not of languages; and it is in the knowledge of the things that science and philosophy teach, that learning consists.

“Almost all the scientific learning that now exists, came to us from the Greeks, or the people who spoke the Greek language. It, therefore, became necessary for the people of other nations, who spoke a different language, that some among them should learn the Greek language, in order that the learning the Greeks had, might be made known in those nations, by translating the Greek books of science and philosophy into the mother tongue of each nation.

“The study therefore of the Greek language (and in the same manner for the Latin) was no other than the drudgery business of a linguist; and the language thus obtained, was no other than the means, as it were the tools, employed to obtain the learning the Greeks had. It made no part of the learning itself; and was so distinct from it, as to make it exceedingly probable that the persons who had studied Greek sufficiently to translate those works, such, for instance, as Euclid’s Elements, did not understand any of the learning the works contained.

“As there is now nothing new to be learned from the dead languages, all the useful books being already translated, the languages are become useless, and the time expended in teaching and in learning them is wasted. So far as the study of languages may contribute to the progress and communication of knowledge, (for it has nothing to do with the *creation* of knowledge) it is only in the living languages that new knowledge is to be found; and certain it is, that, in general, a youth will learn more of a living language in one year, than of a dead language in seven; and it is but seldom that the teacher knows much of it himself. The difficulty of learning the dead languages does not arise from any superior abstruseness in the languages themselves, but in their *being dead*, and the pronunciation entirely lost. It would be the same thing with any other language when it becomes dead. The best Greek linguist that now exists, does not understand Greek so well as a Grecian ploughman did, or a Grecian milkmaid; and the same for the Latin, compared with a ploughman or milkmaid of the Romans; and with respect to the pronunciation and idiom, not so well as the cows that she milked. It would therefore be advantageous to the state of learning to abolish the study of the dead languages, and to make learning consist, as it originally did, in scientific knowledge.

“The apology that is sometimes made for continuing to teach the dead languages is, that they are taught at a time when a child is not capable of exerting any other mental faculty than that of me-

mory; but that is altogether erroneous. The human mind has a natural disposition to scientific knowledge, and to the things connected with it. The first and favourite amusement of a child, even before it begins to play, is that of imitating the works of man. It builds houses with cards or sticks; it navigates the little ocean of a bowl of water with a paper boat, or dams the stream of a gutter, and contrives something which it calls a mill: and it interests itself in the fate of its works with a care that resembles affection. It afterwards goes to school, where its genius is killed by the barren study of a dead language, and the philosopher is lost in the linguist.

"But the apology that is now made for continuing to teach the dead languages, could not be the cause, at first, of cutting down learning to the narrow and humble sphere of linguistry; the cause, therefore, must be sought for elsewhere. In all researches of this kind, the best evidence that can be produced, is the internal evidence the thing carries with itself, and the evidence of circumstances that unites with it: both of which, in this case, are not difficult to be discovered.

"Putting then aside, as a matter of distinct consideration, the outrage offered to the moral justice of God, by supposing him to make the innocent suffer for the guilty, and also the loose morality and low contrivance of supposing him to change himself into the shape of a man, in order to make an excuse to himself for not executing his supposed sentence upon Adam; putting, I say, those things aside, as matter of distinct consideration, it is certain that what is called the Christian system of faith, including in it the whimsical account of the Creation—the strange story of Eve—the snake and the apple—the ambiguous idea of a man-god—the corporeal idea of the death of a god—the mythological idea of a family of gods, and the Christian system of arithmetic, that three are one, and one is three, are all irreconcilable, not only to the divine gift of reason, that God hath given to Man, but to the knowledge that man gains of the power and wisdom of God, by the aid of the sciences, and by studying the structure of the universe that God has made.

"The setter-up, therefore, and the advocates of the Christian system of faith, could not but foresee that the continually progressive knowledge that man would gain, by the aid of science, of the power and wisdom of God, manifested in the structure of the universe, and in all the works of Creation, would militate against, and call into question, the truth of their system of faith; and therefore it became necessary to their purpose to cut learning down to a size less dangerous to their project, and this they effected by restricting the idea of learning to the dead study of dead languages.

"They not only rejected the study of science out of the Christian schools, but they persecuted it; and it is only within about the last two centuries that the study has been revived. So late as 1610, Galileo, a Florentine, discovered and introduced the use of

telescopes, and by applying them to observe the motions and appearances of the heavenly bodies afforded additional means for ascertaining the true structure of the universe. Instead of being esteemed for those discoveries, he was sentenced to renounce them, or the opinions resulting from them, as a damnable heresy. And prior to that time Vigilius was condemned to be burned for asserting the antipodes, or in other words, that the earth was a globe, and habitable in every part where there was land ; yet the truth of this is now too well known even to be told.

“ If the belief of errors not morally bad did no mischief, it would make no part of the moral duty of man to oppose and remove them. There was no moral ill in believing the earth was flat like a trencher, any more than there was moral virtue in believing it was round like a globe ; neither was there any moral ill in believing that the Creator made no other world than this, any more than there was moral virtue in believing that he made millions, and that the infinity of space is filled with worlds. But when a system of religion is made to grow out of a supposed system of creation that is not true, and to unite itself therewith in a manner almost inseparable therefrom, the case assumes an entirely different ground. It is then that errors, not morally bad, become fraught with the same mischiefs as if they were. It is then that the truth, though otherwise indifferent itself, becomes an essential, by becoming the criterion, that either confirms by corresponding evidence, or denies by contradictory evidence, the reality of the religion itself. In this view of the case, it is the moral duty of man to obtain every possible evidence that the structure of the heavens, or any other part of creation affords, with respect to systems of religion : But this, the supporters or partizans of the Christian system, as if dreading the result, incessantly opposed, and not only rejected the sciences, but persecuted the professors. Had Newton or Descartes lived three or four hundred years ago, and pursued their studies as they did, it is most probable they would not have lived to finish them ; and had Franklin drawn lightning from the clouds at the same time, it would have been at the hazard of expiring for it in flames.”

If Dr. Franklin had lived in the time of Sir Matthew Hale, Gentlemen of the Jury, he would certainly have been equally punished for being a witch.

“ Latter times have laid all the blame upon the Goths and Vandals ; but, however unwilling the partizans of the Christian system may be to believe or to acknowledge it, it is nevertheless true, that the age of ignorance commenced with the Christian system. There was more knowledge in the world before that period, than for many centuries afterwards ; and as to religious knowledge, the Christian system, as already said, was only another spe-

cies of mythology ; and the mythology to which it succeeded, was a corruption of an ancient system of theism.*

“ It is owing to this long interregnum of science, *and to no other cause*, that we have now to look through a vast chasm of many hundred years to the respectable characters we call the ancients. Had the progression of knowledge gone on proportionably with the stock that before existed, that chasm would have been filled up with characters rising superior in knowledge to each other ; and those ancients we now so much admire, would have appeared respectably in the back-ground of the scene. But the Christian system laid all waste ; and if we take our stand about the beginning of the sixteenth century, we look back through that long chasm, to the times of the ancients, as over a vast sandy desert, in which not a shrub appears to intercept the vision to the fertile hills beyond.

“ It is an inconsistency scarcely possible to be credited, that any thing should exist, under the name of a religion, that held it to be *irreligious* to study and contemplate the structure of the universe that God had made. But the fact is too well established to be denied. The event that served more than any other to break the first link in this long chain of despotic ignorance, is that known by the name of the Reformation by Luther. From that time, though it does not appear to have made any part of the intention of Luther, or of those who are called reformers, the sciences began to revive, and liberality, their natural associate, began to appear. This was the only public good the Reformation did ; for, with respect to religious good, it might as well not have taken place. The mythology still continued the same ; and a multiplicity of National Popes grew out of the downfall of the Pope of Christendom.

* “ It is impossible for us now to know at what time the heathen mythology began ; but it is certain, from the internal evidence that it carries, that it did not begin in the same state or condition in which it ended. All the gods of that mythology, except Saturn, were of modern invention. The supposed reign of Saturn was prior to that which is called the heathen mythology, and was so far a species of theism, that it admitted the belief of only one God. Saturn is supposed to have abdicated the government in favour of his three sons and one daughter, Jupiter, Pluto, Neptune, and Juno ; after this, thousands of other gods and demi-gods were imaginarily created, and the calendar of gods increased as fast as the calendar of saints, and the calendars of courts have increased since.

“ All the corruptions that have taken place in theology and in religion, have been produced by admitting of what man calls *revealed religion*. The Mythologists pretended to more revealed religion than the Christians do. They had their oracles and their priests, who were supposed to receive and deliver the word of God verbally, on almost all occasions.

“ Since then all corruptions drawn from Moloch to modern predestinarianism, and the human sacrifices of the heathens to the Christian sacrifice of the Creator, have been produced by admitting of what is called *revealed religion*, the most effectual means to prevent all such evils and impositions is, not to admit of any other revelation than that which is manifested in the book of creation, and to contemplate the creation as the only true and real word of God that ever did, or ever will exist ; and that every thing else, called the word of God, is fable and imposition.”

" Having thus shewn from the internal evidence of things, the cause that produced a change in the state of learning, and the motive for substituting the study of the dead languages in the place of the sciences, I proceed, in addition to the several observations already made in the former part of this work, to compare or rather to confront the evidence that the structure of the universe affords, with the Christian system of religion; but, as I cannot begin this part better than by referring to the ideas that occurred to me at an early part of life, and which I doubt not have occurred in some degree to almost every other person at one time or other, I shall state what those ideas were, and add thereto such other matter as shall arise out of the subject, giving to the whole, by way of preface, a short introduction.

" My father being of the Quaker profession, it was my good fortune to have an exceeding good moral education, and a tolerable stock of useful learning. Though I went to the grammar school, I did not learn Latin, not only because I had no inclination to learn languages, but because of the objection the Quakers have against the books in which the language is taught. But this did not prevent me from being acquainted with the subjects of all the Latin books used in the school.

" The natural bent of my mind was to science. I had some turn, and I believe some talent for poetry; but this I rather repressed than encouraged, as leading too much into the field of imagination. As soon as I was able, I purchased a pair of globes, and attended the philosophical lectures of Martin and Ferguson, and became afterwards acquainted with Dr. Bevis, of the society called the Royal Society, then living in the Temple, and an excellent astronomer.

" I had no disposition for what is called politics. It presented to my mind no other idea than is contained in the word Jockeyship. When, therefore, I turned my thoughts towards matters of government, I had to form a system for myself, that accorded with the moral and philosophic principles in which I had been educated. I saw, or at least I thought I saw, a vast scene opening itself to the world in the affairs of America; and it appeared to me, that unless the Americans changed the plan they were then pursuing, with respect to the government of England, and declared themselves independent, they would not only involve themselves in a multiplicity of new difficulties, but shut out the prospect that was then offering itself to mankind through their means. It was from these motives that I published the work known by the name of "*Common Sense*," which is the first work I ever did publish; and so far as I can judge of myself, I believe I never should have been known in the world as an author, on any subject whatever, had it not been for the affairs of America. I wrote "*Common Sense*" the latter end of the year 1775, and published it the 1st of January, 1776. Independence was declared the 4th of July following.

"Any person, who has made observations on the state and progress of the human mind, by observing his own, cannot but have observed, that there are two distinct classes of what are called Thoughts; those that we produce in ourselves by reflection and the act of thinking, and those that bolt into the mind of their own accord. I have always made it a rule to treat those voluntary visitors with civility, taking care to examine, as well as I was able, if they were worth entertaining; and it is from them I have acquired almost all the knowledge that I have. As to the learning that any person gains from school education, it serves only, like a small capital, to put him in the way of beginning learning for himself afterwards. Every person of learning is finally his own teacher, the reason of which is, that principles, being of a distinct quality to circumstances, cannot be impressed upon the memory; their place of mental residence is the understanding, and they are never so lasting as when they begin by conception. Thus much for the introductory part.

"From the time I was capable of conceiving an idea, and acting upon it by reflection, I either doubted the truth of the Christian system, or thought it to be a strange affair; I scarcely knew which it was: but I well remember, when about seven or eight years of age, hearing a sermon read by a relation of mine, who was a great devotee of the church, upon the subject of what is called *redemption by the death of the Son of God*. After the sermon was ended, I went into the garden, and as I was going down the garden steps (for I perfectly recollect the spot) I revolted at the recollection of what I had heard, and thought to myself that it was making God Almighty act like a passionate man that killed his son, when he could not revenge himself any other way; and as I was sure a man would be hanged, that did such a thing, I could not see for what purpose they preached such sermons. This was not one of those kind of thoughts that had any thing in it of childish levity; it was to me a serious reflection, arising from the idea I had, that God was too good to do such an action, and also too almighty to be under any necessity of doing it. I believe in the same manner to this moment; and I moreover believe, that any system of religion, that has any thing in it that shocks the mind of a child, cannot be a true system.

"It seems as if parents of the Christian profession were ashamed to tell their children any thing about the principles of their religion. They sometimes instruct them in morals, and talk to them of the goodness of what they call Providence; for the Christian mythology has five deities—there is God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, the God Providence, and the Goddess Nature. But the Christian story of God the Father putting his son to death, or employing people to do it (for that is the plain language of the story) cannot be told by a parent to a child; and to tell him that it was done to make mankind happier and better, is making the story still worse, as if mankind could be improved

by the example of murder, and to tell him that all this is a mystery, is only making an excuse for the incredibility of it.

“How different is this to the pure and simple profession of Deism! The true Deist has but one Deity; and his religion consists in contemplating the power, wisdom, and benignity of the Deity in his works, and in endeavouring to imitate him in every thing moral, scientific, and mechanical.

“The religion that approaches the nearest of all others to true Deism, in the moral and benign part thereof, is that professed by the Quakers; but they have contracted themselves too much, by leaving the works of God out of their system. Though I reverence their philanthropy, I cannot help smiling at the conceit, that if the taste of a Quaker could have been consulted at the creation, what a silent and drab-coloured creation it would have been! Not a flower would have blossomed its gaities, nor a bird been permitted to sing.

“Quitting these reflections, I proceed to other matters. After I had made myself master of the use of the globes, and the orrery, and conceived an idea of the infinity of space, and the eternal divisibility of matter, and obtained, at least, a general knowledge of what is called natural philosophy, I began to compare, or, as I have before said, to confront the eternal evidence those things afford with the Christian system of faith.

“Though it is not a direct article of the Christian system, that this world that we inhabit, is the whole of the habitable creation, yet it is so worked up therewith, from what is called the Mosaic account of the Creation, the story of Eve and the apple, and the counterpart of that story, the death of the Son of God, that to believe otherwise, that is, to believe that God created a plurality of worlds, at least as numerous as what we call stars, renders the Christian system of faith at once little and ridiculous, and scatters it in the mind like feathers in the air. The two beliefs cannot be held together in the same mind; and he who thinks that he believes both, has thought but little of either.

“Though the belief of a plurality of worlds was familiar to the ancients, it is only within the last three centuries that the extent and dimensions of this globe that we inhabit have been ascertained. Several vessels following the tract of the ocean, have sailed entirely round the world, as a man may march in a circle, and come round by the contrary side of the circle to the spot he set out from. The circular dimensions of our world, in the widest part, as a man would measure the widest round of an apple or a ball, is only twenty-five thousand and twenty English miles, reckoning sixty-nine miles and a half to an equatorial degree, and may be sailed round in the space of about three years.

“A world of this extent may, at first thought, appear to us to be great; but if we compare it with the immensity of space in which it is suspended, like a bubble or balloon in the air, it is infinitely less, in proportion, than the smallest grain of sand is to the size of

the world, or the finest particle of dew to the whole ocean, and is therefore but small; and, as will be hereafter shewn, is only one of a system of worlds, of which the universal creation is composed.

“It is not difficult to gain some faint idea of the immensity of space in which this and all the other worlds are suspended, if we follow a progression of ideas. When we think of the size or dimensions of a room, our ideas limit themselves to the walls, and there they stop; but when our eye, or our imagination darts into space, that is, when it looks upward into what we call the open air, we cannot conceive any walls or boundaries it can have; and if, for the sake of resting our ideas, we suppose a boundary, the question immediately renews itself, and asks, what is beyond that boundary? and, in the same manner, what is beyond the next boundary? and so on, till the fatigued imagination returns and says, *there is no end*. Certainly, then, the Creator was not pent for room, when he made this world no larger than it is; and we have to seek the reason in something else.

“If we take a survey of our own world, or rather of this, of which the Creator has given us the use, as our portion in the immense system of Creation, we find every part of it, the earth, the waters, and the air that surrounds it, filled, and, as it were, crowded with life, down from the largest animals that we know of to the smallest insects the naked eye can behold, and from thence to others still smaller and totally invisible without the assistance of the microscope. Every tree, every plant, every leaf, serves not only as an habitation, but as a world to some numerous race, till animal existence becomes so exceedingly refined, that the effluvia of a blade of grass would be food for thousands.

“Since then no part of our earth is left unoccupied, why is it to be supposed that the immensity of space is a naked void, lying in eternal waste? There is room for millions of worlds as large or larger than ours, and each of them millions of miles apart from each other.

“Having now arrived at this point, if we carry our ideas only one thought further, we shall see, perhaps, the true reason, at least a very good reason, for our happiness: why the Creator, instead of making one immense world, extending over an immense quantity of space, has preferred dividing that quantity of matter, into several distinct and separate worlds, which we call planets, of which our earth is one. But before I explain my ideas upon this subject, it is necessary (not for the sake of those that already know, but for those who do not) to shew what the system of the universe is.

“That part of the universe that is called the solar system (meaning the system of worlds to which our earth belongs, and of which Sol, or in English language, the Sun, is the centre) consists, besides the Sun, of six distinct orbs, or planets, or worlds, besides the secondary bodies, called the satellites or moons, of which our

earth has one that attends her in her annual revolution round the sun, in like manner as the other satellites or moons attend the planets or worlds to which they severally belong, as may be seen by the assistance of the telescope.

"The Sun is the centre, round which those six worlds or planets revolve at different distances therefrom, and in circles concentrate to each other. Each world keeps constantly in nearly the same track round the Sun, and continues at the same time, turning round itself, innearly an upright position, as a top turns round itself when it is spinning on the ground, and leans a little sideways.

"It is this leaning of the earth ($23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees) that occasions summer and winter, and the different length of days and nights. If the earth turned round itself in a position perpendicular to the plane or level of the circle it moves in around the Sun, as a top turns round when it stands erect on the ground, the days and nights would be always of the same length, twelve hours day and twelve hours night, and the seasons would be uniformly the same throughout the year.

"Every time that a planet (our earth for example) turns round itself, it makes what we call day and night; and every time it goes entirely round the Sun, it makes what we call a year, consequently our world turns three hundred and sixty-five times round itself, in going once round the Sun.*

"The names that the ancients gave to those six worlds, and which are still called by the same names, are Mercury, Venus, this world that we call ours, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. They appear larger to the eye than the stars, being many million miles nearer to our earth than any of the stars are. The planet Venus is that which is called the evening star, and sometimes the morning star, as she happens to set after, or rise before the Sun, which, in either case, is never more than three hours.

"The Sun, as before said, being the centre, the planet, or world, nearest the Sun, is Mercury; his distance from the Sun is thirty-four million miles, and he moves round in a circle always at that distance from the Sun, as a top may be supposed to spin round in the tract in which a horse goes in a mill. The second world is Venus; she is fifty-seven million miles distant from the Sun, and consequently moves round in a circle much greater than that of Mercury. The third world is this that we inhabit, and which is eighty-eight million miles distant from the Sun, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of Venus. The fourth world is Mars, he is distant from the Sun one hundred and thirty-four million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of our earth. The fifth is Jupiter, he is distant

* "Those who supposed that the Sun went round the earth every 24 hours made the same mistake in idea that a cook would do in fact, that should make the fire go round the meat, instead of the meat turning round itself towards the fire."

from the Sun five hundred and fifty-seven million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle greater than that of Mars. The sixth world is Saturn, he is distant from the Sun seven hundred and sixty-three million miles, and consequently moves round in a circle that surrounds the circles, or orbits of all the other worlds, or planets.

"The space, therefore, in the air, or in the immensity of space, that our solar system takes up for the several worlds to perform their revolutions in round the Sun, is of the extent in a strait line of the whole diameter of the orbit or circle, in which Saturn moves round the Sun, which being double his distance from the Sun, is fifteen hundred and twenty-six million miles: and its circular extent is nearly five thousand millions; and its globical content is almost three thousand five hundred million times three thousand five hundred million square miles.

"But this, immense as it is, is only one system of worlds. Beyond this, at a vast distance into space, far beyond all power of calculation, are the stars called the fixed stars. They are called fixed, because they have no revolutionary motion, as the six worlds or planets have that I have been describing. Those fixed stars continue always at the same distance from each other, and always in the same place, as the Sun does in the centre of our system. The probability, therefore, is, that each of those fixed stars is also a Sun, round which another system of worlds or planets, though too remote for us to discover, performs its revolutions, as our system of worlds does round our central Sun.

"By this easy progression of ideas, the immensity of space will appear to us to be filled with systems of worlds; and that no part of space lies at waste, any more than any part of the globe of earth and water is left unoccupied.

"Having thus endeavoured to convey, in a familiar and easy manner, some idea of the structure of the universe, I return to explain what I before alluded to, namely, the great benefits arising to man in consequence of the Creator having made a *plurality* of worlds, such as our system is, consisting of a central Sun and six worlds, besides satellites, in preference to that of creating one world only of a vast extent.

"It is an idea I have never lost sight of, that all our knowledge of science is derived from the revolutions (exhibited to our eye, and from thence to our understanding) which those several planets or worlds, of which our system is composed, make in their circuit round the Sun.

"Had then the quantity of matter which these six worlds contain been blended into one solitary globe, the consequence to us would have been, that either no revolutionary motion would have existed, or not a sufficiency of it to give us the idea and the knowledge of science we now have; and it is from the sciences that all the mechanical arts that contribute so much to our earthly felicity and comfort, are derived.

"As, therefore, the Creator made nothing in vain, so also must it be believed that he organized the structure of the universe in the most advantageous manner for the benefit of man; and as we see, and from experience feel, the benefits we derive from the structure of the universe, formed as it is, which benefits we should not have had the opportunity of enjoying, if the structure, so far as relates to our system, had been a solitary globe—we can discover at least one reason why a *plurality* of worlds has been made, and that reason calls forth the devotional gratitude of man, as well as his admiration.

"But it is not to us, the inhabitants of this globe, only, that benefits arising from a plurality of worlds are limited. The inhabitants of each of the worlds of which our system is composed, enjoy the same opportunities of knowledge as we do. They behold the revolutionary motions of our earth, as we behold theirs. All the planets revolve in sight of each other; and, therefore, the same universal school of science presents itself to all.

"Neither does the knowledge stop here. The system of worlds next to us exhibits, in its revolutions, the same principles and school of science, to the inhabitants of their system, as our system does to us, and in like manner throughout the immensity of space.

"Our ideas, not only of the almightiness of the Creator, but of his wisdom and his beneficence, become enlarged in proportion as we contemplate the extent and the structure of the universe. The solitary idea of a solitary world, rolling or at rest in the immense ocean of space, gives place to the cheerful idea of a society of worlds, so happily contrived as to administer, even by their motion, instruction to man. We see our own earth filled with abundance; but we forget to consider how much of that abundance is owing to the scientific knowledge the vast machinery of the universe has unfolded.

"But, in the midst of those reflections, what are we to think of the Christian system of faith, that forms itself upon the idea of only one world, and that of no greater extent, as is before shewn, than twenty-five thousand miles? An extent which a man, walking at the rate of three miles an hour, for twelve hours in the day, could he keep on in a circular direction, would walk entirely round in less than two years. Alas! what is this to the mighty ocean of space, and the almighty power of the Creator!

"From whence then could arise the solitary and strange conceit, that the Almighty, who had millions of worlds equally dependent on his protection, should quit the care of all the rest, and come to die in our world, because, they say, one man and one woman had eaten an apple! And, on the other hand, are we to suppose that every world in the boundless creation, had an Eve, an apple, a serpent, and a redeemer? In this case, the person who is irreverently called the Son of God, and sometimes God himself, would have nothing else to do than to travel from world to world, in an endless succession of death, with scarcely a momentary interval of life.

"It has been by rejecting the evidence, that the word or works of God in the Creation affords to our senses, and the action of our reason upon that evidence, that so many wild and whimsical systems of faith, and of religion, have been fabricated and set up. There may be many systems of religion, that so far from being morally bad, are in many respects morally good: but there can be but ONE that is true; and that one necessarily must, as it ever will, be in all things consistent with the ever-existing word of God that we behold in his works. But such is the strange construction of the Christian system of faith, that every evidence the Heavens afford to man, either directly contradicts it, or renders it absurd.

"It is possible to believe, and I always feel pleasure in encouraging myself to believe it, that there have been men in the world who persuade themselves that, what is called a *pious fraud*, might, at least under particular circumstances, be productive of some good. But the fraud being once established, could not afterwards be explained: for it is with a pious fraud as with a bad action, it begets a calamitous necessity of going on.

"The persons who first preached the Christian system of faith, and in some measure combined it with the morality preached by Jesus Christ, might persuade themselves that it was better than the heathen mythology that then prevailed. From the first preachers the fraud went on to the second, and to the third, till the idea of its being a pious fraud became lost in the belief of its being true; and that belief became again encouraged by the interest of those who made a livelihood by preaching it.

"But though such a belief might, by such means, be rendered almost general among the laity, it is next to impossible to account for the continual persecution carried on by the church, for several hundred years, against the sciences, and against the professors of sciences, if the church had not some record or some tradition, that it was originally no other than a pious fraud, or did not foresee, that it could not be maintained against the evidence that the structure of the universe afforded.

"Having thus shewn the irreconcilable inconsistencies between the real word of God existing in the universe and that which is called the *word of God*, as shewn to us in a printed book that any man might make, I proceed to speak of the three principal means that have been employed in all ages, and perhaps in all countries, to impose upon mankind.

"Those three means are Mystery, Miracle, and Prophecy. The two first are incompatible with true religion, and the third ought always to be suspected.

"With respect to mystery every thing we behold is, in one sense, a mystery to us. Our own existence is a mystery; the whole vegetable world is a mystery. We cannot account how it is that an acorn, when put into the ground, is made to develope itself, and become an oak. We know not how it is that the seed we sow un-

folds and multiplies itself, and returns to us such an abundant interest for so small a capital.

"The fact, however, as distinct from the operating cause, is not a mystery, because we see it ; and we know also the means we are to use, which is no other than putting the seed in the ground. We know, therefore, as much as is necessary for us to know ; and that part of the operation that we do not know, and which if we did we could not perform, the Creator takes upon himself and performs it for us. We are, therefore, better off than if we had been let into the secret, and left to do it for ourselves ;

"But though every created thing is, in this sense, a mystery, the word mystery cannot be applied to *moral truth*, any more than obscurity can be applied to light. The God in whom we believe is a God of moral truth, and not a God of mystery or obscurity. Mystery is the antagonist of truth. It is a fog of human invention, that obscures truth, and represents it in distortion. Truth never envelopes *itself* in mystery ; and the mystery in which it is at any time enveloped is the work of its antagonist, and never of itself.

"Religion, therefore, being the belief of a God, and the practice of moral truth, cannot have connection with mystery. The belief of a God, so far from having any thing of mystery in it, is of all beliefs the most easy, because it arises to us, as is before observed, out of necessity. And the practices of moral truth, or, in other words, a practical imitation of the moral goodness of God, is no other than our acting towards each other as he acts benignly towards all. We cannot *serve* God in the manner we serve those who cannot do without such service ; and therefore the only idea we can have of serving God, is that of contributing to the happiness of the living creation that God has made. This cannot be done by retiring ourselves from the society of the world, and spending a reclusive life in selfish devotion.

"The very nature and design of religion, if I may so express it, prove, even to demonstration, that it must be free from every thing of mystery, and unincumbered with every thing that is mysterious. Religion, considered as a duty, is incumbent upon every living soul alike, and, therefore, must be on a level to the understanding and comprehension of all. Man does not learn religion as he learns the secrets and mysteries of a trade. He learns the theory of religion by reflection. It arises out of the action of his own mind upon the things which he sees, or upon what he may happen to hear or to read, and the practice joins itself thereto.

"When men, whether from policy or pious fraud, set up systems of religion incompatible with the word or works of God in the creation, and not only above, but repugnant to human comprehension, they were under the necessity of inventing or adopting a word that should serve as a bar to all questions, inquiries, and speculations. The word *mystery* answered this purpose ; and thus it has happened that religion, which in itself is without mystery, has been corrupted into a fog of mysteries.

“ As *mystery* answered all general purposes, *miracle* followed as an occasional auxiliary. The former served to bewilder the mind, the latter to puzzle the senses. The one was the lingo, the other the legerdemain.

“ But before going further into this subject, it will be proper to inquire what is to be understood by a miracle.

“ In the same sense that every thing may be said to be a mystery, so also may it be said that every thing is a miracle, and that no one thing is a greater miracle than another. The elephant, though larger, is not a greater miracle than a mite: nor a mountain a greater miracle than an atom. To an Almighty power, it is no more difficult to make the one than the other; and no more difficult to make a million of worlds than to make one. Every thing, therefore, is a miracle, in one sense, whilst in the other sense, there is no such thing as a miracle. It is a miracle when compared to our power, and to our comprehension; it is not a miracle compared to the power that performs it; but as nothing in this description conveys the idea that is affixed to the word miracle, it is necessary to carry the inquiry further.

“ Mankind have conceived to themselves certain laws, by which what they call nature is supposed to act; and that a miracle is something contrary to the operation and effect of those laws; but unless we know the whole extent of those laws, and of what are commonly called the powers of nature, we are not able to judge whether any thing that may appear to us wonderful or miraculous, be within, or be beyond, or be contrary to, her natural power of acting.

“ The ascension of a man several miles high into the air, would have every thing in it that constitutes the idea of a miracle, if it were not known that a species of air can be generated several times lighter than the common atmospheric air, and yet possess elasticity enough to prevent the balloon, in which that light air is inclosed, from being compressed into as many times less bulk, by the common air that surrounds it. In like manner, extracting flames or sparks of fire from the human body, as visible as from a steel struck with a flint, and causing iron or steel to move without any visible agent, would also give the idea of a miracle, if we were not acquainted with electricity and magnetism; so also would many other experiments in natural philosophy, to those who are not acquainted with the subject. The restoring persons to life, who are to appearance dead, as is practised upon drowning persons, would also be a miracle, if it were not known that animation is capable of being suspended without being extinct.

“ Besides these, there are performances by slight of hand, and by persons acting in concert, that have a miraculous appearance, which when known, are thought nothing of. And, besides these, there are mechanical and optical deceptions. There is now an exhibition in Paris of ghosts or spectres, which, though it is not imposed upon the spectators, as a fact, has an astonishing appear-

ance. As, therefore, we know not the extent to which either nature or art can go, there is no positive criterion to determine what a miracle is; and mankind, in giving credit to appearances, under the idea of their being miracles, are subject to be continually imposed upon.

“ Since then appearances are so capable of deceiving, and things not real have a strong resemblance to things that are, nothing can be more inconsistent than to suppose that the Almighty would make use of means, such as are called miracles, that would subject the person who performed them to the suspicion of being an impostor, and the person who related them to be suspected of lying, and the doctrine intended to be supported thereby to be suspected as a fabulous invention.

“ Of all the modes of evidence that ever were invented to obtain belief to any system or opinion to which the name of religion has been given, that of miracle, however successful the imposition may have been, is the most inconsistent. For, in the first place, whenever recourse is had to show, for the purpose of procuring that belief, (for a miracle, under any idea of the word, is a show) it implies a lameness or weakness in the doctrine that is preached. And, in the second place, it is degrading the Almighty into the character of a show-man, playing tricks to amuse and make the people stare and wonder. It is also the most equivocal sort of evidence that can be set up; for the belief is not to depend upon the thing called a miracle, but upon the credit of the reporter, who says that he saw it; and, therefore, the thing, were it true, would have no better chance of being believed than if it were a lie.

“ Suppose I were to say, that when I sat down to write this book a hand presented itself in the air, took up the pen and wrote every word that is herein written: would any body believe me? Certainly they would not. Would they believe me a whit the more if the thing had been a fact? Certainly they would not. Since then a real miracle, were it to happen, would be subject to the same fate as the falsehood, the inconsistency becomes the greater, of supposing the Almighty would make use of means that would not answer the purpose for which they were intended, even if they were real.

“ If we are to suppose a miracle to be something so entirely out of the course of what is called nature, that she must go out of that course to accomplish it, and we see an account given of such miracle by the person who said he saw it, it raises a question in the mind very easily decided, which is, is it more probable that nature should go out of her course, or that a man should tell a lie? We have never seen, in our time, nature go out of her course; but we have good reason to believe that millions of lies have been told in the same time; it is, therefore, at least millions to one, that the reporter of a miracle tells a lie.

“ But supposing that Jonah had really swallowed the whale, and had gone with it in his belly to Nineveh, and to convince the peo-

ple that it was true, have cast it up in their sight, of the full length and size of a whale, would they not have believed him to have been the devil, instead of a prophet? Or, if the whale had carried Jonah to Nineveh, and cast him up in the same public manner, would they not have believed the whale to have been the devil, and Jonah one of his imps?

“The most extraordinary of all the things called miracles, related in the New Testament, is that of the devil flying away with Jesus Christ, and carrying him to the top of a high mountain; and to the top of the highest pinnacle of the temple, and shewing him and promising to him *all the kingdoms of the world*. How happened it that he did not discover America; or is it only with *kingdoms* that his sooty highness has any interest?

“I have too much respect for the moral character of Christ, to believe that he told this whale of a miracle himself; neither is it easy to account for what purpose it could have been fabricated, unless it were to impose upon the connoisseurs of miracles; as is sometimes practised upon the connoisseurs of Queen Anne’s farthings, and collectors of relics and antiquities; or to render the belief of miracles ridiculous, by outdoing miracle, as Don Quixote outdid chivalry; or to embarrass the belief of miracles, by making it doubtful by what power, whether of God or of the Devil, any thing called a miracle was performed. It requires, however, a great deal of faith in the devil to believe this miracle.

“In every point of view in which those things called miracles can be placed and considered, the reality of them is improbable, and their existence unnecessary. They would not, as before observed, answer any useful purpose, even if they were true; for it is more difficult to obtain belief to a miracle, than to a principle evidently moral, without any miracle. Moral principle speaks universally for itself. Miracle could be but a thing of the moment, and seen but by a few; after this it requires a transfer of faith from God to man, to believe a miracle upon man’s report. Instead therefore of admitting the recitals of miracles as evidence of any system of religion being true, they ought to be considered as symptoms of its being fabulous. It is necessary to the full and upright character of truth, that it rejects the crutch; and it is consistent with the character of fable, to seek the aid that truth rejects. Thus much for mystery and miracle.

“As mystery and miracle took charge of the past and the present, prophecy took charge of the future, and rounded the tenses of faith. It was not sufficient to know what had been done, but what would be done. The supposed prophet was the supposed historian of times to come; and if he happened, in shooting with a long bow of a thousand years, to strike within a thousand miles of a mark, the ingenuity of posterity could make it point-blank; and if he happened to be directly wrong, it was only to suppose, as in the case of Jonah and Nineveh, that God had repented himself and changed his mind. What a fool do fabulous systems make of man!

“It has been shewn, in a former part of this work, that the original meaning of the words *prophet* and *prophesying* has been changed, and that a prophet, in the sense of the word as now used, is a creature of modern invention; and it is owing to this change in the meaning of the words, that the flights and metaphors of the Jewish poets and phrases, and expressions now rendered obscure, by our not being acquainted with the local circumstances to which they applied at the time they were used, have been erected into prophecies, and made to bend to explanations, and the will and whimsical conceits of sectaries, expounders, and commentators. Every thing unintelligible was prophetic, and every thing insignificant was typical. A blunder would have served for a prophecy; and a dish-clout for a type.

“If by a prophet we are to suppose a man, to whom the Almighty communicated some event that would take place in future, either there were such men, or there were not. If there were, it is consistent to believe that the event, so communicated, would be told in terms that could be understood; and not related in such a loose and obscure manner as to be out of the comprehension of those that heard it, and so equivocal as to fit almost any circumstance that might happen afterwards. It is conceiving very irreverently of the Almighty, to suppose he would deal in this jesting manner with mankind; yet all the things called prophecies in the book called the Bible, come under this description.

“But it is with prophecy as it is with miracle; it could not answer the purpose even if it were real. Those to whom a prophecy should be told, could not tell whether the man prophesied or lied, or whether it had been revealed to him, or whether he conceived it; and if the thing that he prophesied, or intended to prophecy, should happen, or something like it, among the multitude of things that are daily happening, nobody could again know whether he foreknew it, or guessed at it, or whether it was accidental. A prophet therefore is a character useless and unnecessary; and the safe side of the case is, to guard against being imposed upon by not giving credit to such relations.

“Upon the whole, mystery, miracle, and prophecy, are appendages that belong to fabulous and not to true religion. They are the means by which so many *Lo heres!* and *Lo theres!* have been spread about the world, and religion been made into a trade. The success of one impostor gave encouragement to another, and the quieting salvo of doing *some good* by keeping up a *pious fraud*, protected them from remorse.

“Having now extended the subject to a greater length than I first intended, I shall bring it to a close by abstracting a summary from the whole.

“First—That the idea or belief of a word of God existing in print, or in writing, or in speech, is inconsistent in itself for reasons already assigned. These reasons, among many others, are the want of an universal language; the mutability of language; the errors

to which translations are subject; the possibility of totally suppressing such a word; the probability of altering it, or of fabricating the whole, and imposing it upon the world.

“Secondly—That the Creation we behold is the real and ever existing word of God, in which we cannot be deceived. It proclaims his power, it demonstrates his wisdom, it manifests his goodness and beneficence.

“Thirdly—That the moral duty of man consists in imitating the moral goodness and beneficence of God manifested in the Creation towards all his creatures. That seeing as we daily do the goodness of God to all men, it is an example calling upon all men to practise the same towards each other; and consequently that every thing of persecution and revenge between man and man, and every thing of cruelty to animals, is a violation of moral duty.

“I trouble not myself about the manner of future existence. I content myself with believing, even to positive conviction, that the power that gave me existence is able to continue it, in any form and manner he pleases, either with or without this body; and it appears more probable to me that I shall continue to exist hereafter, than that I should have had existence, as I now have, before that existence began.

“It is certain that, in one point, all nations of the earth and all religions agree; all believe in a God; the things in which they disagree, are the redundancies annexed to that belief; and, therefore, if ever an universal religion should prevail, it will not be believing any thing new, but in getting rid of redundancies, and believing as man believed at first. Adam, if ever there was such a man, was created a Deist; but in the mean time, let every man follow, as he has a right to do, the religion and the worship he prefers.”

This, Gentlemen, finishes the first part of the *Age of Reason*, and I now ask you, or rather I leave you to judge for yourselves, whether there is to be found in it a single sentence hostile to the cause of justice, or morality, or tending to demoralize the mind of man? No, Gentlemen, it does not, but on the contrary it contains a finer system of ethics, and is more calculated to improve and exalt the human faculties, than any thing which can be congregated, or formed from that Book which it so ably investigates. Two extracts only have been made from all that I have just read, and inserted in the Indictment which my persecutors have so zealously put together for the purpose of overwhelming me—and these two passages I have already noticed. I shall now, Gentlemen, proceed to read the Second Part of Paine’s *Age of Reason*, being the continuation of an investigation of True and Fabulous Theology.

“I HAVE mentioned in the former part of *The Age of Reason*,

that it had long been my intention to publish my thoughts upon religion; but that I had originally reserved it to a later period in life, intending it to be the last work I should undertake. The circumstances, however, which existed in France in the latter end of the year 1793, determined me to delay it no longer. The just and humane principles of the revolution, which philosophy had first diffused, had been departed from. The idea, always dangerous to society as it is derogatory to the Almighty, that priests could forgive sins, though it seemed to exist no longer, had blunted the feelings of humanity, and callously prepared men for the commission of all manner of crimes. The intolerant spirit of church persecutions had transferred itself into politics; the tribunal, styled revolutionary, supplied the place of an inquisition; and the guillotine and the stake out-did the fire and faggot of the church. I saw many of my most intimate friends destroyed; others daily carried to prison; and I had reason to believe, and had also intimations given me, that the same danger was approaching myself.

"Under these disadvantages, I began the former part of the Age of Reason; I had, besides, neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, though I was writing against both; nor could I procure any; notwithstanding which, I have produced a work that no Bible believer, though writing at his ease, and with a library of church books about him, can refute. Towards the latter end of December of that year, a motion was made and carried, to exclude foreigners from the Convention. There were but two in it, Anacharsis Cloots and myself; and I saw, I was particularly pointed at by Bourdon de l'Oise, in his speech on that motion.

"Conceiving, after this, that I had but a few days of liberty, I sat down and brought the work to a close as speedily as possible and I had not finished it more than six hours, in the state it has since appeared, before a guard came about three in the morning, with an order signed by the two committees of public safety and surety-general, for putting me in arrestation as a foreigner, and conveyed me to the prison of the Luxembourg. I contrived, in my way there, to call on Joel Barlow, and I put the manuscript of the work into his hands, as more safe than in my possession in prison; and not knowing what might be the fate in France, either of the writer or the work, I addressed it to the protection of the citizens of the United States.

"It is with justice that I say, that the guard who executed this order, and the interpreter of the Committee of General Surety, who accompanied them to examine my papers, treated me not only with civility, but with respect. The keeper of the Luxembourg, Bennoit, a man of a good heart, shewed to me every friendship in his power, as did also all his family, while he continued in that station. He was removed from it, put into arrestation, and carried before the tribunal upon a malignant accusation, but acquitted.

"After I had been in the Luxembourg about three weeks, the

Americans, then in Paris, went in a body to the convention, to reclaim me as their countryman and friend; but were answered by the President, Vadier, who was also President of the Committee of Surety-General, and had signed the order for my arrestation, that I was born in England. I heard no more after this, from any person out of the walls of the prison, till the fall of Robespierre, on the 9th of Thermidor—July 27, 1794.

“About two months before this event, I was seized with a fever, that in its progress had every symptom of becoming mortal, and from the effects of which I am not recovered. It was then that I remembered with renewed satisfaction, and congratulated myself most sincerely, on having written the former part of *“The Age of Reason.”* I had then but little expectation of surviving, and those about me had less. I know, therefore, by experience, the conscientious trial of my own principles.”

This is a flat contradiction to the allusion of Mr. Attorney-General as to Mr. Paine's death. But the best authorities deny the circumstances, in which that Learned Gentleman, together with many others, not better informed, state him to have died. To discolour and misrepresent seems to have been the object of these persons; but they cannot still alter facts, or divert inquiry into the only channels they may wish themselves.

“I was then with three chamber comrades, Joseph Vanhuele, of Bruges, Charles Bastini, and Michael Robyns, of Louvain. The unceasing and anxious attention of these three friends to me, by night and by day, I remember with gratitude, and mention with pleasure. It happened that a physician (Dr. Graham) and a surgeon (Mr. Bond), part of the suite of General O'Hara, were then in the Luxembourg. I ask not myself, whether it be convenient to them, as men under the English Government, that I express to them my thanks; but I should reproach myself if I did not; and also to the physician of the Luxembourg, Dr. Markoski.

“I have some reason to believe, because I cannot discover any other cause, that this illness preserved me in existence. Among the papers of Robespierre that were examined and reported upon to the Convention, by a Committee of Deputies, is a note in the hand-writing of Robespierre, in the following words:

“Demand that Thomas Paine be decreed of accusation, for the interest of America as well as of France.”

“From what cause it was that the intention was not put in execution, I know not, and cannot inform myself; and therefore I ascribe it to impossibility; on account of that illness.

“The Convention, to repair as much as lay in their power the injustice I had sustained, invited me publicly and unanimously to

return into the Convention, and which I accepted, to shew I could bear an injury without permitting it to injure my principles, or my disposition. It is not because right principles have been violated, that they are to be abandoned.

"I have seen, since I have been at liberty, several publications written, some in America, and some in England, as answers to the former part of "*The Age of Reason*." If the authors of these can amuse themselves by so doing, I shall not interrupt them. They may write against the work, and against me, as much as they please; they do me more service than they intend, and I can have no objection that they write on. They will find, however, by this Second Part, without its being written as an answer to them, that they must return to their work, and spin their cobweb over again. The first is brushed away by accident.

"They will now find that I have furnished myself with a Bible and Testament, and I can say also, that I have found them to be much worse books than I had conceived. If I have erred in any thing, in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, it has been by speaking better of some parts of those books than they deserved.

"I observe, that all my opponents resort, more or less, to what they call Scripture Evidence and Bible Authority, to help them out. They are so little masters of the subject, as to confound a dispute about authenticity with a dispute about doctrines; I will, however, put them right, that if they should be disposed to write any more, they may know how to begin.

"THOMAS PAINE."

"It has often been said, that any thing may be proved from the Bible, but before any thing can be admitted as proved by the Bible, the Bible itself must be proved to be true; for if the Bible be not true, or the truth of it be doubtful, it ceases to have authority, and cannot be admitted as proof of any thing.

"It has been the practice of all Christian commentators on the Bible, and of all Christian priests and preachers, to impose the Bible on the world as a mass of truth, and as the word of God; they have disputed and wrangled, and have anathematized each other about the supposable meaning of particular parts and passages therein; one has said and insisted that such a passage meant such a thing; another that it meant directly the contrary; and a third, that it meant neither one nor the other, but something different from both; and this they call *understanding* the Bible.

"It has happened, that all the answers which I have seen to the former part of the *Age of Reason* have been written by priests; and these pious men, like their predecessors, contend and wrangle, and pretend to *understand* the Bible; each understands it differently, but each understands it best; and they have agreed in nothing, but in telling their readers that Thomas Paine understands it not.

"Now instead of wasting their time, and heating themselves in

fractional disputations about doctrinal points drawn from the Bible, these men ought to know, and if they do not, it is civility to inform them, that the first thing to be understood is, whether there is sufficient authority for believing the Bible to be the word of God, or whether there is not.

“There are matters in that book, said to be done by the *express command* of God, that are as shocking to humanity, and to every idea we have of moral justice, as any thing done by Robespierre, by Carrier, by Joseph le Bon, in France, by the English government in the East Indies, or by any other assassin in modern times. When we read in the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, &c. that they (the Israelites) came by stealth upon whole nations of people, who, as the history itself shews, had given them no offence; *that they put all those nations to the sword; that they spared neither age nor infancy; that they utterly destroyed men, women, and children; that they left not a soul to breathe*; expressions that are repeated over and over again in those books, and that too with exulting ferocity; are we sure these things are facts? Are we sure that the Creator of man commissioned these things to be done? Are we sure that the books that tell us so were written by his authority?

“It is not the antiquity of a tale that is any evidence of its truth; on the contrary, it is a symptom of its being fabulous; for the more ancient any history pretends to be, the more it has the resemblance of a fable. The origin of every nation is buried in fabulous tradition, and that of the Jews is as much to be suspected as any other. To charge the commission of acts upon the Almighty, which in their own nature, and by every rule of moral justice, are crimes, as all assassination is, and more especially the assassination of infants, is matter of serious concern.—”

Gentlemen, although the last three sentences of the paragraph I have read are also included amongst the offensive passages, declared to be so heinous in the eyes of the Deity, and inserted in the information; yet his Majesty’s Attorney-General has thought proper to pass it over without offering to you a single observation. A circumstance which, I have no doubt, will make its due impression, when the period arrives for the delivery of your verdict.

———“The Bible tells us, that those assassinations were done by the *express command of God*. To believe, therefore, the Bible to be true, we must *unbelieve* all our belief in the moral justice of God; for wherein could crying or smiling infants offend? And to read the Bible without horror, we must undo every thing that is tender, sympathising, and benevolent in the heart of man. Speaking for myself, if I had no other evidence that the Bible is fabulous, than the sacrifice I must make to believe it to be true, that alone would be sufficient to determine my choice.

" But, in addition to all the moral evidence against the Bible, I will, in the progress of this work, produce such other evidence, as even a priest cannot deny; and shew from that evidence, that the Bible is not entitled to credit, as being the word of God.

" But, before I proceed to this examination, I will shew, wherein the Bible differs from all other ancient writings with respect to the nature of the evidence necessary to establish its authenticity; and this is the more proper to be done, because the advocates of the Bible, in their answers to the former part of the *Age of Reason*, undertake to say, and they put some stress thereon, that the authenticity of the Bible is as well established as that of any other ancient book; as if our belief of the one could become any rule for our belief of the other.

" I know, however, but of one ancient book that authoritatively challenges universal consent and belief, and that is *Euclid's Elements of Geometry**; and the reason is, because it is a book of self-evident demonstration, entirely independent of its author, and of every thing relating to time, place, and circumstance. The matters contained in that book would have the same authority they now have, had they been written by any other person, or had the work been anonymous, or had the author never been known; for the identical certainty of who was the author, makes no part of our belief of the matters contained in the book. But it is quite otherwise with respect to the books ascribed to Moses, to Joshua, to Samuel, &c.—those are books of *testimony*, and they testify of things naturally incredible; and therefore the whole of our belief, as to the authenticity of those books, rests, in the first place, upon the *certainty* that they were written by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; secondly, upon the credit we give to their testimony. We may believe the first, that is, we may believe the certainty of the authorship, and yet not the testimony; in the same manner that we may believe that a certain person gave evidence upon a case, and yet not believe the evidence that he gave. But if it should be found, that the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, were not written by Moses, Joshua, and Samuel, every part of the authority and authenticity of those books is gone at once; for there can be no such thing as forged or invented testimony; neither can there be anonymous testimony, more especially as to things naturally incredible; such as that of talking with God face to face, or that of the sun and moon standing still at the command of a man. The greatest part of the other ancient books are works of genius; of which kind are those ascribed to Homer, to Plato, to Aristotle, to Demosthenes, to Cicero, &c. Here again the author is not an essential in the credit we give to any of those works; for, as works of genius, they would have the same merit

* " Euclid according to chronological history, lived three hundred years before Christ, and about one hundred before Archimedes; he was of the city of Alexandria, in Egypt.

they have now, were they anonymous. Nobody believes the Trojan story, as related by Homer, to be true: for it is the poet only that is admired: and the merit of the poet will remain, though the story be fabulous. But if we disbelieve the matters related by the Bible authors (Moses, for instance) as we disbelieve the things related by Homer, there remains nothing of Moses in our estimation, but an impostor. As to the ancient historians from Herodotus to Tacitus, we credit them as far as they relate things probable and credible, and no further; for if we do, we must believe the two miracles which Tacitus relates were performed by Vespasian, that of curing a lame man, and a blind man, in just the same manner as the same things are told of Jesus Christ by his historians. We must also believe the miracle cited by Josephus, that of the sea of Pamphilia opening to let Alexander and his army pass, as is related of the Red Sea in Exodus. These miracles are quite as well authenticated as the Bible miracles, and yet we do not believe them; consequently the degree of evidence necessary to establish our belief of things naturally incredible, whether in the Bible or elsewhere, is far greater than that which obtains our belief to natural and probable things; and therefore the advocates for the Bible have no claim to our belief of the Bible, because that we believe things stated in other ancient writings; since we believe the things stated in these writings no further than they are probable and credible, or because they are self-evident, like Euclid; or admire them because they are elegant, like Homer; or approve them because they are sedate, like Plato; or judicious, like Aristotle.

“Having premised these things, I proceed to examine the authenticity of the Bible, and I begin with what are called the five books of Moses, *Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy*. My intention is to shew that those books are spurious, and that Moses is not the author of them; and still further, that they were not written in the time of Moses, nor till several hundred years afterwards; that they are no other than an attempted history of the life of Moses, and of the times in which he is said to have lived, and also of the times prior thereto, written by some very ignorant and stupid pretenders to authorship, several hundred years after the death of Moses, as men now write histories of things that happened, or are supposed to have happened, several hundred or several thousand years ago.

“The evidence that I shall produce in this case is from the books themselves; and I will confine myself to this evidence only. Were I to refer for proofs to any of the ancient authors, whom the advocates of the Bible call profane authors, they would controvert that authority, as I controvert theirs; I will therefore meet them on their own ground, and oppose them with their own weapon, the Bible.”

“If any of you, Gentlemen, wish for a Bible, to compare the quotations as I read them from ‘The Age of Reason,’

and see that they are exactly the same, I have twelve in Court for that purpose, which are entirely at your service.

(The offer not being accepted, Mr. Carlile proceeded to read on.)

“ In the first place, there is no affirmative evidence that Moses is the author of those books; and that he is the author, is altogether an unfounded opinion, got abroad nobody knows how. The style and manner in which those books are written, give no room to believe, or even to suppose, they were written by Moses; for it is altogether the style and manner of another person speaking of Moses. In Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers (for every thing in Genesis is prior to the time of Moses, and not the least allusion is made to him therein) the whole, I say, of these books is in the third person; it is always, *the Lord said unto Moses*, or *Moses said unto the Lord*; or *Moses said unto the people*, or *the people said unto Moses*; and this is the style and manner that historians use, in speaking of the person whose lives and actions they are writing. It may be said that a man may speak of himself in the third person; and therefore, it may be supposed that Moses did; but supposition proves nothing; and if the advocates for the belief that Moses wrote those books himself, have nothing better to advance than supposition, they may as well be silent.

“ But granting the grammatical right, that Moses might speak of himself in the third person, because any man might speak of himself in that manner, it cannot be admitted as a fact in those books, that it is Moses who speaks, without rendering Moses truly ridiculous and absurd:—for example, Numbers, chap. xii. ver. 3. “*Now, the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were on the face of the earth.*” If Moses said this of himself, instead of being the meekest of men, he was one of the most vain and arrogant of coxcombs; and the advocates for those books may now take which side they please, for both sides are against them; if Moses was not the author, the books are without authority; and if he was the author, the author is without credit, because to boast of *meekness*, is the reverse of meekness, and is a *lie in sentiment*.

“ In Deuteronomy, the style and manner of writing marks more evidently than in the former books, that Moses is not the writer. The manner here used is dramatical: the writer opens the subject by a short introductory discourse, and then introduces Moses as in the act of speaking, and when he has made Moses finish his harangue, he (the writer) resumes his own part, and speaks till he brings Moses forward again, and at last closes the scene with an account of the death, funeral, and character of Moses.

“ This interchange of speakers occurs four times in this book: from the first verse of the first chapter, to the end of the fifth verse, it is the writer who speaks; he then introduces Moses as in the act of making his harangue, and this continues to the end of the 40th verse of the fourth chapter; here the writer drops Moses,

and speaks historically of what was done in consequence of what Moses, when living, is supposed to have said, and which the writer has dramatically rehearsed.

“ The writer opens the subject again in the first verse of the fifth chapter, though it is only by saying, that Moses called the people of Israel together ; he then introduces Moses as before, and continues him, as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 26th chapter. He does the same thing at the beginning of the 27th chapter ; and continues Moses, as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 28th chapter. At the 29th chapter the writer speaks again through the whole of the first verse, and the first line of the second verse, where he introduces Moses for the last time, and continues him, as in the act of speaking, to the end of the 33d chapter.

“ The writer having now finished the rehearsal on the part of Moses, comes forward, and speaks through the whole of the last chapter ; he begins by telling the reader, that Moses went up to the top of Pisgah ; that he saw from thence the land which (the writer says) had been promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; that he, Moses, died there, in the land of Moab, but that no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day ; that is, unto the time in which the writer lived, who wrote the book of Deuteronomy. The writer then tells us, that Moses was 110 years of age when he died—that his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated ; and he concludes by saying, that there arose not a prophet *since* in Israel like unto Moses, whom, says this anonymous writer, the Lord knew face to face.

“ Having thus shewn, as far as grammatical evidence applies, that Moses was not the writer of those books, I will, after making a few observations on the inconsistencies of the writer of the book of Deuteronomy, proceed to shew, from the historical and chronological evidence contained in those books, that Moses *was not*, because *he could not be*, the writer of them ; and, consequently, that there is no authority for believing, that the inhuman and horrid butcheries of men, women, and children, told of in those books, were done, as those books say they were, at the command of God. It is a duty incumbent on every true Deist, that he vindicates the moral justice of God against the calumnies of the Bible.

“ The writer of the Book of Deuteronomy, whoever he was, (for it is an anonymous work) is obscure, and also in contradiction with himself, in the account he has given of Moses.

“ After telling that Moses went to the top of Pisgah (and it does not appear from any account that he ever came down again) he tells us, that Moses died *there* in the land of Moab, and that *he* buried him in a valley in the land of Moab ; but as there is no antecedent to the pronoun *he*, there is no knowing who *he* was that did bury him. If the writer meant that *he* (God) buried him, how should *he* (the writer) know it ? or why should we (the readers) believe him ? since we know not who the writer was that

tells us so, for certainly Moses could not himself tell where he was buried.

“ The writer also tells us, that no man knoweth where the sepulchre of Moses is *unto this day*, meaning the time in which this writer lived ; how then should he know that Moses was buried in a valley in the land of Moab ? For as the writer lived long after the time of Moses, as is evident from his using the expression of *unto this day*, meaning a great length of time after the death of Moses, he certainly was not at his funeral ; and, on the other hand, it is impossible that Moses himself could say, that *no man knoweth where the sepulchre is unto this day*. To make Moses the speaker, would be an improvement on the play of a child that hides himself, and cries *nobody can find me ; nobody can find Moses*.

“ This writer has nowhere told us how he came by the speeches which he has put into the mouth of Moses to speak, and therefore we have a right to conclude, that he either composed them himself, or wrote them from oral tradition. One or other of these is the more probable, since he has given, in the fifth chapter, a table of commandments, in which that called the fourth commandment is different from the fourth commandment in the 20th chapter of Exodus. In that of Exodus, the reason given for keeping the seventh day is, “ because (says the commandment) God made the heavens and the earth in six days, and rested on the seventh ;” but in that of Deuteronomy, the reason given is, that it was the day, on which the children of Israel came out of Egypt, and, *therefore*, says this commandment, *the Lord thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath-day*. This makes no mention of the creation, nor that of the coming out of Egypt. There are also many things given as laws of Moses in this book, that are not to be found in any of the other books ; among which is, that inhuman and brutal law, chap. xxi. ver. 18, 19, 20, 21, which authorizes parents, the father and the mother, to bring their own children to have them stoned to death, for what it is pleased to call stubbornness. But priests have always been fond of preaching up Deuteronomy, for Deuteronomy preaches up tythes ; and it is from this book, chap. xxv. ver. 4, they have taken the phrase, and applied it to tything, that *thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn* ; and that this might not escape observation, they have noted it in the table of contents at the head of the chapter, though it is only a single verse of less than two lines. O priests ! priests ! ye are willing to be compared to an ox, for the sake of tythes. Though it is impossible for us to know *identically* who the writer of Deuteronomy was, it is not difficult to discover him *professionally* that he was some Jewish priest, who lived, as I shall shew in the course of this work, at least three hundred and fifty years after the time of Moses.

“ I come now to speak of the historical and chronological evidence. The chronology that I shall use is the Bible chronology ; for I mean not to go out of the Bible for evidence of any thing, but to

make the Bible itself prove **historically** and chronologically that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him. It is therefore proper that I inform the reader, (such an one at least as may not have the opportunity of knowing it) that in the larger Bibles, and also in some smaller ones, there is a series of chronology printed in the margin of every page, for the purpose of shewing how long the historical matters stated in each page happened, or are supposed to have happened, before Christ, and consequently the distance of time between one historical circumstance and another.

“ I begin with the book of Genesis. In the 14th chapter of Genesis, the writer gives an account of Lot being taken prisoner in a battle between the four kings against five, and carried off; and that when the account of Lot being taken came to Abraham, he armed all his household, and marched to rescue Lot from the captors; and that he pursued them unto Dan, (ver. 14.)

“ To shew in what manner this expression of *pursuing them unto Dan* applies to the case in question, I will refer to two circumstances, the one in America, the other in France. The city now called New York, in America, was originally New Amsterdam; and the town in France, lately called Havre Marat, was before called Havre de Grace. New Amsterdam was changed to New York in the year 1664; Havre de Grace to Havre Marat in the year 1793. Should, therefore, any writing be found, though without date, in which the name of New York should be mentioned, it would be certain evidence that such a writing could not have been written before, and must have been written after New Amsterdam was changed to New York, and consequently not till after the year 1664, or at least during the course of that year. And, in like manner, any dateless writing, with the name of Havre Marat, would be certain evidence that such a writing must have been written after Havre de Grace became Havre Marat, and consequently not till after the year 1793, or at least during the course of that year.

“ I now come to the application of those cases, and to shew that there was no such place as *Dan*, till many years after the death of Moses; and, consequently, that Moses could not be the writer of the book of Genesis, where this account of pursuing them unto *Dan* is given.

“ The place that is called Dan in the Bible was originally a town of the Gentiles, called Laish; and when the tribe of Dan seized upon this town, they changed its name to *Dan*, in commemoration of Dan, who was the father of that tribe, and the great grandson of Abraham.

“ To establish this in proof, it is necessary to refer from Genesis to the 18th chapter of the book called the Book of Judges. It is there said (ver. 27) *that they* (the Danites) *came unto Laish to a people that were quiet and secure, and they smote them with the edge of the sword* (the Bible is filled with murder) *and burned the city with fire; and they built a city,* (ver. 28) and dwelt therein

and they called the name of the city Dan, after the name of Dan their father ; howbeit the name of the city was Laish at the first.

“ This account of the Danites taking possession of Laish and changing it to Dan, is placed in the book of Judges immediately after the death of Sampson. The death of Sampson is said to have happened 1120 years before Christ, and that of Moses 1451 before Christ ; and therefore, according to the historical arrangement, the place was not called Dan till 331 years after the death of Moses.

“ There is a striking confusion between the historical and the chronological arrangement in the Book of Judges. The five last chapters, as they stand in the book, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, are put chronologically before all the preceding chapters ; they are made to be 28 years before the 16th chapter, 266 before the 15th, 245 before the 13th, 195 before the 9th, 90 before the 4th, and 15 years before the 1st chapter. This shews the uncertain and fabulous state of the Bible. According to the chronological arrangement, the taking of Laish, and giving it the name of Dan, is made to be 20 years after the death of Joshua, who was the successor of Moses ; and by the historical order as it stands in the book, it is made to be 306 years after the death of Joshua, and 331 after that of Moses, but they both exclude Moses from being the writer of Genesis, because, according to either of the statements, no such place as Dan existed in the time of Moses ; and therefore the writer of Genesis must have been some person who lived after the town of Laish had the name of Dan ; and who that person was, nobody knows ; and consequently the book of Genesis is anonymous and without authority.

“ I proceed now to state another point of historical and chronological evidence, and to shew therefrom, as in the preceding case, that Moses is not the author of the book of Genesis.

“ In the 36th chapter of Genesis there is given a genealogy of the sons and descendants of Esau, who are called Edomites, and also a list, by name, of the kings of Edom ; in enumerating of which, it is said, ver. 31, ‘ *And these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel.*’

“ Now, were any dateless writings to be found, in which, speaking of any past events, the writer should say, these things happened before there was any Congress in America, or before there was any Convention in France, it would be evidence that such writing could not have been written before, and could only be written after there was a Congress in America, or a Convention in France, as the case might be ; and consequently that it could not be written by any person who died before there was a Congress in the one country, or a Convention in the other.

“ Nothing is more frequent, as well in history as in conversation, than to refer to a fact in the room of a date : it is most natural so to do : first, because a fact fixes itself in the memory better than a

date ; secondly, because the fact includes the date, and serves to excite two ideas at once ; and this manner of speaking by circumstances implies as positively that the fact alluded to is *past*, as if it was so expressed. When a person, speaking upon any matter, says, it was before I was married, or before my son was born, or before I went to America, or before I went to France, it is absolutely understood, and intended to be understood, that he has been in America, or been in France. Language does not admit of using this mode of expression in any other sense ; and whenever such an expression is found any where, it can only be understood in the sense in which only it could have been used.

“ The passage, therefore, that I have quoted—‘ that these are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned *any* king over the children of Israel,’ could only have been written after the first king began to reign over them ; and, consequently, that the book of Genesis, so far from having been written by Moses, could not have been written till the time of Saul at least. This is the positive sense of the passage ; but the expression, *any* king, implies more kings than one, at least it implies two, and this will carry it to the time of David ; and, if taken in a general sense, it carries itself through all the times of the Jewish Monarchy.

“ Had we met with this verse in any part of the Bible that *professed* to have been written after kings began to reign in Israel, it would have been impossible not to have seen the application of it. It happens then that this is the case ; the two books of Chronicles, which gave a history of all the kings of Israel, are *professedly*, as well as in fact, written after the Jewish monarchy began ; and this verse that I have quoted, and all the remaining verses of the 36th chapter of Genesis, are, word for word, in the first chapter of Chronicles, beginning at the 43d verse.

“ It was with consistency that the writer of the Chronicles could say, as he has said, 1st Chron. chap. i. ver. 43, *These are the kings that reigned in Edom, before there reigned any king over the children of Israel*, because he was going to give, and has given, a list of the kings that had reigned in Israel ; but as it is impossible that the same expression could have been used before that period, it is as certain as any thing can be proved from historical language, that this part of Genesis is taken from Chronicles, and that Genesis is not so old as Chronicles, and probably not so old as the book of Homer, or as Æsop’s Fables, admitting Homer to have been as the tables of Chronology state, contemporary with David or Solomon, and Æsop to have lived about the end of the Jewish monarchy.

“ Take away from Genesis the belief that Moses was the author, on which only the strange belief that it is the word of God has stood, and there remains nothing of Genesis but an anonymous book of stories, fables, and traditionary or invented absurdities, or of downright lies. The story of Eve and the serpent, and of Noah and his ark, drops to a level with the Arabian Tales, without the merit of

being entertaining ; and the account of men living to eight or nine hundred years becomes as fabulous as the immortality of the giants of Mythology.

“ Besides, the character of Moses, as stated in the Bible, is the most horrid that can be imagined. If those accounts be true, he was the wretch that first began and carried on wars on the score, or on the pretence of religion ; and under that mask, or that infatuation, committed the most unexampled atrocities that are to be found in the history of any nation, of which I will state only one instance.

“ When the Jewish army returned from one of their plundering and murdering excursions, the account goes on as follows, Numbers, chap. xxi. ver. 13.

“ ‘ And Moses, and Eleazar the priest, and all the princes of the congregation, went forth to meet them without the camp ; and Moses was wrath with the officers of the host, with the captains over thousands, and captains over hundreds, which came from the battle ; and Moses said unto them, *Have ye saved all the women alive ?* behold, these caused the children of Israel, through the council of Balaam, to commit trespass against the Lord in the matter of Peor, and there was a plague among the congregation of the Lord. Now, therefore, *kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known a man by lying with him ; but all the women children that have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves.*’

“ Among the detestable villains that in any period of the world have disgraced the name of man, it is impossible to find a greater than Moses, if this account be true. Here is an order to butcher the boys, to massacre the mothers, and debauch the daughters.

“ Let any mother put herself in the situation of those mothers : one child murdered, another destined to violation, and herself in the hands of an executioner : let any daughter put herself in the situation of those daughters, destined as a prey to the murderers of a mother and a brother, and what will be their feelings ? It is in vain that we attempt to impose upon nature, for nature will have her course, and the religion that tortures all her social ties is a false religion.

“ After this detestable order, follows an account of the plunder taken, and the manner of dividing it ; and here it is that the profaneness of priestly hypocrisy increases the catalogue of crimes. Verse 37, ‘ *And the Lord’s tribute* of the sheep was six hundred and threescore and fifteen ; and the beeves was thirty and six thousand, of which the *Lord’s tribute* was threescore and twelve ; and the asses were thirty thousand, of which the *Lord’s tribute* was threescore and one ; and the persons were thirty thousand, of which the *Lord’s tribute* was thirty and two.’ In short, the matters contained in this chapter, as well as in many other parts of the Bible, are too horrid for humanity to read, or for decency to hear ; for it appears, from the 35th verse of this chapter, that the number

of women-children consigned to debauchery by the order of Moses was thirty-two thousand."

Gentlemen, Mr. Paine should also have added here, that the priests took for themselves out of the spoil, thirty and two. Gentlemen, if I had written or published any thing to equal this in indecency or wickedness, could I expect any favour or indulgence at your hands? I could not, nor have I, or Mr. Paine, through the whole course of his writings, ever attempted to affix such slanders, or such blasphemies, on the Deity; but on the other hand, we have endeavoured to destroy the belief in such horrid attributes.

"People in general know not what wickedness there is in this pretended word of God. Brought up in habits of superstition, they take it for granted that the Bible is true, and that it is good; they permit themselves not to doubt of it, and they carry the ideas they form of the benevolence of the Almighty to the book which they have been taught to believe was written by his authority. Good heavens! it is quite another thing; it is a book of lies, wickedness, and blasphemy; for what can be greater blasphemy, than to ascribe the wickedness of man to the orders of the Almighty?"

"But to return to my subject, that of shewing that Moses is not the author of the books ascribed to him, and that the Bible is spurious. The two instances I have already given would be sufficient, without any additional evidence, to invalidate the authenticity of any book that pretended to be four or five hundred years more ancient than the matters it speaks of or refers to as facts; for in the case of *pursuing them unto Dan*, and of *the kings that reigned over the children of Israel*, not even the flimsy pretence of prophesy can be pleaded. The expressions are in the preter tense, and it would be downright idiotism to say that a man could prophesy in the preter tense.

"But there are many other passages scattered throughout those books that unite in the same point of evidence. It is said in Exodus, (another of the books ascribed to Moses) chap. xvi. verse 34, '*And the children of Israel did eat manna until they came to a land inhabited; they did eat manna until they came unto the borders of the land of Canaan.*'

"Whether the children of Israel ate manna or not, or what manna was, or whether it was any thing more than a kind of fungus or small mushroom, or other vegetable substance common to that part of the country, makes nothing to my argument; all that I mean to shew is, that it is not Moses that could write this account, because the account extends itself beyond the life and time of Moses. Moses, according to the Bible (but it is such a book of lies and contradictions there is no knowing which part to believe, or whether any) dies in the wilderness, and never came upon the borders of the land of Canaan; and consequently it could not be he

that said what the children of Israel did, or what they ate when they came there. This account of eating manna, which they tell us was written by Moses, extends itself to the time of Joshua, the successors of Moses, as appears by the account given in the book of Joshua, after the children of Israel had passed the river Jordan, and came unto the borders of the land of Canaan. Joshua, chap. v. ver. 12. *'And the manna ceased on the morrow, after they had eaten of the old corn of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more, but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year.'*

"But a more remarkable instance than this occurs in Deuteronomy; which, while it shews that Moses could not be the writer of that book, shews also the fabulous notions that prevailed at that time about giants. In the third chapter of Deuteronomy, among the conquests said to be made by Moses, is an account of the taking of Og, king of Bashan, ver. 11. *'For only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the race of giants; behold, his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; is it not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it, after the cubit of a man.'* A cubit is 1 foot 9 888-1000ths inches; the length, therefore, of the bed was 16 feet 4 inches, and the breadth 7 feet 4 inches; thus much for this giant's bed. Now for the historical part, which, though the evidence is not so direct and positive, as in the former cases, is nevertheless very presumable and corroborating evidence, and is better than the *best* evidence on the contrary side.

"The writer, by way of proving the existence of this giant, refers to his bed, as to an *ancient relic*, and says, is it not in Rabbath (or Rabbah) of the children of Ammon? meaning that it is; for such is frequently the Bible method of affirming a thing. But it could not be Moses that said this, because Moses could know nothing about Rabbah, nor of what was in it. Rabbah was not a city belonging to this giant king, nor was it one of the cities that Moses took. The knowledge, therefore, that this bed was at Rabbah, and of the particulars of its dimensions, must be referred to the time when Rabbah was taken, and this was not till four hundred years after the death of Moses; for which, see 2 Sam. chap. xii. ver 26. *'And Joab (David's general) fought against Rabbah of the children of Ammon, and took the royal city.'*

"As I am not undertaking to point out all the contradictions in time, place, and circumstance, that abound in the books ascribed to Moses, and which prove to a demonstration that those books could not be written by Moses, nor in the time of Moses; I proceed to the book of Joshua, and to shew that Joshua is not the author of that book, and that it is anonymous and without authority. The evidence I shall produce is contained in the book itself; I will not go out of the Bible for proof against the supposed authenticity of the Bible. False testimony is always good against itself.

"Joshua, according to the first chapter of Joshua, was the imme-

diate successor of Moses ; he was moreover a military man, which Moses was not, and he continued as chief of the people of Israel 25 years ; that is, from the time that Moses died, which, according to the Bible chronology, was 1451 years before Christ, until 1426 years before Christ, when, according to the same chronology, Joshua died. If, therefore, we find in this book, said to have been written by Joshua, reference to *facts done* after the death of Joshua, it is evidence that Joshua could not be the author ; and also that the book could not have been written till after the time of the latest fact which it records. As to the character of the book, it is horrid ; it is a military history of rapine and murder, as savage and brutal as those recorded of his predecessor in villainy and hypocrisy, Moses ; and the blasphemy consists, as in the former books, in ascribing those deeds to the orders of the Almighty.

“ In the first place, the book of Joshua, as is the case in the preceding books, is written in the third person ; it is the historian of Joshua that speaks, for it would have been absurd and vain-glorious that Joshua should say of himself, as is said of him in the last verse of the sixth chapter, that ‘ *his fame was noised throughout all the country.*’ I now come more immediately to the proof.

“ In the 24th chapter, ver. 31, it is said, ‘ that Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and *all the days of the elders that over-lived Joshua.*’ Now, in the name of common sense, can it be Joshua that relates what people had done after he was dead ? This account must not only have been written by some historian that lived after Joshua, but that lived also after the elders that out-lived Joshua.

“ There are several passages of a general meaning with respect to time, scattered throughout the book of Joshua, that carries the time in which the book was written to a distance from the time of Joshua, but without marking by exclusion any particular time, as in the passage above quoted. In that passage, the time that intervened between the death of Joshua and the death of the elders is excluded descriptively and absolutely, and the evidence substantiates that the book could not have been written till after the death of the last.

“ But though the passages to which I allude, and which I am going to quote, do not designate any particular time by exclusion, they imply a time far more distant from the days of Joshua, than is contained between the death of Joshua and the death of the elders. Such is the passage, chap. x. ver. 14 ; where, after giving an account that the sun stood still upon Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, at the command of Joshua (a tale only fit to amuse children) the passage says, ‘ And there was no day like that, before it, nor after it, that the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man.’

“ This tale of the sun standing still upon mount Gibeon, and the moon in the valley of Ajalon, is one of those fables that detects itself. Such a circumstance could not have happened without being known all over the world. One half would have wondered

why the sun did not rise, and the other why it did not set; and the tradition of it would be universal: whereas there is not a nation in the world that knows any thing about it. But why must the moon stand still? What occasion could there be for moon-light in the day-time, and that too whilst the sun shined? As a poetical figure, the whole is well enough; it is akin to that in the song of Deborah and Baruk, *The stars in their courses fought against Sisera*; but it is inferior to the figurative declaration of Mahomet, to the persons who came to expostulate with him on his goings on: *Wert thou*, said he, *to come to me with the sun in thy right hand and the moon in thy left, it should not alter my career*. For Joshua to have exceeded Mahomet, he should have put the sun and moon one in each pocket, and carried them as Guy Faux carried his dark lanthorn, and taken them out to shine as he might happen to want them.

“The sublime and the ridiculous are often so nearly related, that it is difficult to class them separately. One step above the sublime makes the ridiculous, and one step above the ridiculous makes the sublime again: the account, however, abstracted from the poetical fancy, shews the ignorance of Joshua, for he should have commanded the earth to have stood still.

“The time implied by the expression *after it*, that is, after that day, being put in comparison with all the time that passed *before it*, must, in order to give any expressive signification to the passage, mean a *great length of time*:—for example, it would have been ridiculous to have said to the next day, or the next week, or the next month, or the next year; to give, therefore, meaning to the passage, comparative with the wonder it relates, and the prior time it alludes to, it must mean centuries of years; less, however, than one would be trifling, and less than two would be barely admissible.

“A distant, but general time, is also expressed in the 8th chapter, where, after giving an account of the taking the city of Ai, it is said, ver. 28th, ‘And Joshua burned Ai, and made it an heap for ever, a desolation *unto this day*,’ and again, ver. 29, where speaking of the king of Ai, whom Joshua had hanged, and buried at the entering of the gate, it is said, ‘And he raised thereon a great heap of stones, which remaineth *unto this day*,’ that is, unto the day or time in which the writer of the book of Joshua lived. And again, in the 10th chapter, where, after speaking of the five kings whom Joshua had hanged on five trees, and then thrown in a cave, it is said, ‘And he laid great stones on the cave’s mouth, which remain *unto this very day*.’

“In enumerating the several exploits of Joshua, and of the tribes, and of the places which they conquered or attempted, it is said, chap. xv. ver. 63, ‘As for the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the children of Judah could not drive them out; but the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah *at Jerusalem unto this day*.’ The question upon this passage is, at what time did the

Jebusites and the children of Judah dwell together at Jerusalem? As this matter occurs again in the first chapter of Judges, I shall reserve my observations till I come to that part.

"Having thus shewn from the book of Joshua itself, without any auxiliary evidence whatever, that Joshua is not the author of that book, and that it is anonymous, and, consequently, without authority, I proceed, as before-mentioned, to the book of Judges.

"The book of Judges is anonymous on the face of it; and therefore even the pretence is wanting to call it the word of God; it has not so much as a nominal voucher; it is altogether fatherless.

"This book begins with the same expression as the book of Joshua. That of Joshua begins, chap. i. ver. 1: *Now after the death of Moses, &c.* and this of Judges begins, *Now after the death of Joshua, &c.* This, and the similarity of style between the two books, indicate that they are the work of the same author; but who he was, is altogether unknown: the only point that the book proves is, that the author lived long after the time of Joshua; for though it begins as if it followed immediately after his death, the second chapter is an epitome or abstract of the whole book, which, according to the Bible Chronology, extends its history through a space of 306 years; that is, from the death of Joshua, 1426 years before Christ, to the death of Sampson, 1120 years before Christ, and only 25 years before Saul went to seek his father's asses, and was made king. But there is good reason to believe, that it was not written till the time of David at least, and that the book of Joshua was not written before the same time.

"In the first chapter of Judges, the writer, after announcing the death of Joshua, proceeds to tell what happened between the children of Judah and the native inhabitants of the land of Canaan. In this statement, the writer, having abruptly mentioned Jerusalem in the 7th verse, says immediately after, in the 8th verse, by way of explanation, '*Now the children of Judah had fought against Jerusalem, and taken it;*' consequently, this book could not have been written before Jerusalem had been taken. The reader will recollect the quotation I have just before made from the 15th chapter of Joshua, ver. 63, where it is said, that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah at Jerusalem at this day;* meaning the time when the book of Joshua was written.

"The evidence I have already produced, to prove that the books I have hitherto treated of were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed, nor till many years after their death, if such persons ever lived, is already so abundant, that I can afford to admit this passage with less weight than I am entitled to draw from it. For the case is, that so far as the Bible can be credited as an history, the city of Jerusalem was not taken till the time of David; and, consequently, that the books of Joshua, and of Judges,

were not written till after the commencement of the reign of David, which was 370 years after the death of Joshua.

“ The name of the city, that was afterwards called Jerusalem, was originally Jebus or Jebusi, and was the capital of the Jebusites. The account of David’s taking this city is given in 2 Samuel, chap. v. ver. 4, &c.; also in 1 Chron. chap. xiv. ver. 4, &c. There is no mention in any part of the Bible that it was ever taken before, nor any account that favours such an opinion. It is not said, either in Samuel or in Chronicles, that they *utterly destroyed men, women, and children; that they left not a soul to breathe*, as is said of their other conquests; and the silence here observed implies that it was taken by capitulation, and that the Jebusites, the native inhabitants, continued to live in the place after it was taken. The account, therefore, given in Joshua, that *the Jebusites dwell with the children of Judah* at Jerusalem at this day, corresponds to no other time than after the taking the city by David.

“ Having now shewn that every book in the Bible, from Genesis to Judges, is without authenticity, I come to the book of Ruth, an idle, bungling story, foolishly told, nobody knows by whom, about a strolling country girl creeping slyly to bed to her cousin Boaz. Pretty stuff indeed to be called the word of God! It is, however, one of the best books in the Bible, for it is free from murder and rapine.

“ I come next to the two books of Samuel, and to shew that those books were not written by Samuel, nor till a great length of time after the death of Samuel; and that they are, like all the former books, anonymous, and without authority.

“ To be convinced that these books have been written much later than the time of Samuel, and consequently not by him, it is only necessary to read the account which the writer gives of Saul going to seek his father’s asses, and of his interview with Samuel, of whom Saul went to enquire about those lost asses, as foolish people now-a-days go to a conjurer to enquire after lost things.

“ The writer, in relating this story of Saul, Samuel, and the asses, does not tell it as a thing that had just then happened, but as an ancient *story in the time this writer lived*; for he tells it in the language or terms used at the time that *Samuel* lived, which obliges the writer to explain the story in the terms or language used in the time the *writer* lived.

“ Samuel, in the account given of him, in the first of those books, chap. ix. is called *the seer*; and it is by this term that Saul inquires after him, ver. 11: ‘ And as they (Saul and his servant) went up the hill to the city, they found young maidens going out to draw water; and they said unto them, *Is the seer here?*’ Saul then went according to the direction of these maidens, and met Samuel without knowing him, and said unto him, ver. 18, ‘ Tell me, I pray thee, where the *seer’s house* is?’ and Samuel answered Saul, and said, *I am the seer.*’

"As the writer of the book of Samuel relates these questions and answers, in the language or manner of speaking used in the time they are said to have been spoken; and as that manner of speaking was out of use when this author wrote, he found it necessary, in order to make the story understood, to explain the terms in which these questions and answers are spoken; and he does this in the 9th verse, where he says, '*Before-time*, in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he spake, Come, let us go to the seer; for he that is now called a prophet, was *before-time* called a seer.' This proves, as I have before said, that this story of Saul, Samuel, and the asses, was an ancient story at the time the book of Samuel was written, and, consequently, that Samuel did not write it, and that that book is without authenticity.

"But if we go further into those books, the evidence is still more positive that Samuel is not the writer of them; for they relate things that did not happen till several years after the death of Samuel. Samuel died before Saul; for the 1st Samuel, chap. xxviii. tells, that Saul and the witch of Endor conjured Samuel up after he was dead; yet the history of the matters contained in those books is extended through the remaining part of Saul's life, and to the latter end of the life of David, who succeeded Saul. The account of the death and burial of Samuel (a thing which he could not write himself) is related in the 25th chapter of the first book of Samuel; and the chronology affixed to this chapter makes this to be 1060 years before Christ; yet the history of this *first* book is brought down to 1056 years before Christ; that is, to the death of Saul, which was not till four years after the death of Samuel.

"The second book of Samuel begins with an account of things that did not happen till four years after Samuel was dead; for it begins with the reign of David, who succeeded Saul, and it goes on to the end of David's reign, which was forty-three years after the death of Samuel; and therefore the books are in themselves positive evidence that they were not written by Samuel.

"I have now gone through all the books in the first part of the Bible, to which the names of persons are affixed, as being the authors of those books, and which the church, styling itself the Christian church, have imposed upon the world as the writings of Moses, Joshua, and Samuel; and I have detected and proved the falsehood of this imposition. And now, ye priests of every description, who have preached and written against the former part of the *Age of Reason*, what have ye to say? Will ye, with all this mass of evidence against you, and staring you in the face, still have the assurance to march into your pulpits, and continue to impose these books on your congregations, as the works of *inspired penmen*, and the word of God, when it is as evident as demonstration can make truth appear, that the persons who, ye say, are the authors, are *not* the authors, and that ye know not who the authors are. What shadow of pretence have ye now to produce,

for continuing the blasphemous fraud? What have ye still to offer against the pure and moral religion of Deism, in support of your system of falsehood, idolatry, and pretended revelation? Had the cruel and murderous orders, with which the Bible is filled, and the numberless torturing executions of men, women, and children, in consequence of those orders, been ascribed to some friend, whose memory you revered, you would have glowed with satisfaction at detecting the falsehood of the charge, and gloried in defending his injured fame. It is because ye are sunk in the cruelty of superstition, or feel no interest in the honour of your Creator, that ye listen to the horrid tales of the Bible, or hear them with callous indifference. The evidence I have produced, and shall still produce in the course of this work, to prove that the Bible is without authority, will, whilst it wounds the stubbornness of a priest, relieve and tranquillize the minds of millions; it will free them from all those hard thoughts of the Almighty which priestcraft and the Bible had infused into their minds, and which stood in everlasting opposition to all their ideas of his moral justice and benevolence.

“ I come now to the two books of Kings, and the two books of Chronicles. Those books are altogether historical, and are chiefly confined to the lives and actions of the Jewish kings, who in general were a parcel of rascals; but these are matters with which we have no more concern, than we have with the Roman emperors, or Homer’s account of the Trojan war. Besides which, as those works are anonymous, and as we know nothing of the writer, or of his character, it is impossible for us to know what degree of credit to give to the matters related therein. Like all other ancient histories, they appear to be a jumble of fable and of fact, and of probable and of improbable things: but which distance of time and place, and change of circumstances in the world, have rendered obsolete and uninteresting.

“ The chief use I shall make of those books, will be that of comparing them with each other, and with other parts of the Bible, to shew the confusion, contradiction, and cruelty, in this pretended word of God.

“ The first book of Kings begins with the reign of Solomon, which, according to the Bible Chronology, was 1015 years before Christ; and the second book ends 588 years before Christ, being a little after the reign of Zedekiah, whom Nebuchadnezzar, after taking Jerusalem, and conquering the Jews, carried captive to Babylon. The two books include a space of 427 years.

“ The two books of Chronicles are an history of the same times, and in general of the same persons, by another author; for it would be absurd to suppose that the same author wrote the history twice over. The first book of Chronicles (after giving the genealogy from Adam to Saul, which takes up the first nine chapters) begins with the reign of David; and the last book ends as in the last book of Kings, soon after the reign of Zedekiah, about 588 years before

Christ. The two last verses of the last chapter bring the history 52 years more forward, that is, to 536. But these verses do not belong to the book, as I shall shew when I come to speak of the book of Ezra.

“ The two books of Kings, besides the history of Saul, David, and Solomon, who reigned over *all* Israel, contain an abstract of the lives of seventeen kings and one queen, who are styled kings of Judah; and of nineteen, who are styled kings of Israel; for the Jewish nation, immediately on the death of Solomon, split into two parties, who chose separate kings, and who carried on most rancorous wars against each other.

“ Those two books are little more than a history of assassinations, treachery, and wars. The cruelties that the Jews had accustomed themselves to practise on the Canaanites, whose country they had savagely invaded under a pretended gift from God, they afterwards practised as furiously on each other. Scarcely half their kings died a natural death, and in some instances whole families were destroyed to secure possession to the successor, who, after a few years, and sometimes only a few months, or less, shared the same fate. In the 10th chapter of the second book of Kings, an account is given of two baskets full of children's heads, 70 in number, being exposed at the entrance of the city; they were the children of Ahab, and were murdered by the orders of Jehu, whom Elisha, the pretended man of God, had anointed to be king over Israel, on purpose to commit this bloody deed, and assassinate his predecessor. And in the account of the reign of Manaham, one of the kings of Israel who had murdered Shallum, who had reigned but one month, it is said, 2 Kings, chap. xv. ver. 16, that Manaham smote the city of Tiphseh, because they opened not the city to him, *and all the women that were therein that were with child they ripped up.*

“ Could we permit ourselves to suppose that the Almighty would distinguish any nation of people by the name of *his chosen people*, we must suppose that people to have been an example to all the rest of the world of the purest piety and humanity, and not such a nation of ruffians and cut-throats as the ancient Jews were; a people, who, corrupted by, and copying after, such monsters and impostors as Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, and David, had distinguished themselves above all others on the face of the known earth, for barbarity and wickedness. If we will not stubbornly shut our eyes, and steel our hearts, it is impossible not to see, in spite of all that long-established superstition imposes upon the mind, that the flattering appellation of *his chosen people* is no other than a *lie*, which the priests and leaders of the Jews had invented to cover the baseness of their own characters; and which Christian priests, sometimes as corrupt, and often as cruel, have professed to believe.

“ The two books of Chronicles are a repetition of the same crimes; but the history is broken in several places, by the author leaving out the reign of some of their kings; and in this, as well as

in that of Kings, there is such a frequent transition from kings of Judah to kings of Israel, and from kings of Israel to kings of Judah, that the narrative is obscure in the reading. In the same book the history sometimes contradicts itself; for example, in the second book of Kings, chap. i. ver. 8, we are told, but in rather ambiguous terms, that after the death of Ahaziah, king of Israel, Jehoram, or Joram (who was of the house of Ahab) reigned in his stead in the *second year of Jehoram, or Joram, son of Jehoshaphat king of Judah*; and in chap. viii. ver. 16, of the same book, it is said, and in the *fifth year of Joram, the son of Ahab, king of Israel, Jehoshaphat being then king of Judah, began to reign*; that is, one chapter says Joram of Judah began to reign in the *second year of Joram of Israel*; and the other chapter says, that Joram of Israel began to reign in the *fifth year of Joram of Judah*.

“Several of the most extraordinary matters related in one history, as having happened during the reign of such and such of their kings, are not to be found in the other, in relating the reign of the same king; for example, the two first rival kings, after the death of Solomon, were Rehoboam and Jeroboam; and in 1 Kings, chap. xii. and xiii. an account is given of Jeroboam making an offering of burnt incense, and that a man, who is there called a man of God, cried out against the altar, chap. xiii. ver. 2, ‘O altar! altar! thus saith the Lord; Behold, a child shall be born to the house of David, Josiah by name, and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places, and burn incense upon thee, and men’s bones shall be burnt upon thee.’—Ver. 3, ‘And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, *Lay hold on him*; and his hand which he put out against him *dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him*.’

“One would think that such an extraordinary case as this, (which is spoken of as a judgment) happening to the chief of one of the parties, and that at the first moment of the separation of the Israelites into two nations, would, if it had been true, been recorded in both histories. But though men in later times have believed *all that the prophets have said unto them*, it does not appear that these prophets or historians believed each other: they knew each other too well.

“A long account also is given in Kings about Elijah. It runs through several chapters, and concludes with telling, 2 Kings, chap. ii. ver. 11, ‘And it came to pass, as they (Elijah and Elisha) still went on, and talked, that behold, there appeared *a chariot of fire and horses of fire*, and parted them both asunder, and *Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven*.’ Hum! this the author of Chronicles, miraculous as the story is, makes no mention of, though he mentions Elijah by name; neither does he say any thing of the story related in the second chapter of the same book of Kings, of a parcel of children calling *Elisha bald head, bald*

head ; and that this *man of God*, ver. 24, turned back, and looked upon them, *and cursed them in the name of the Lord* ; and there came forth two she bears out of the wood, and tore forty and two children of them.' He also passes over in silence the story told, 2 Kings, chap. xiii. that when they were burying a man in the sepulchre, where Elisha had been buried, it happened that the dead man, as they were letting him down, (ver. 21,) ' touched the bones of Elisha, and he (the dead man) *revived, and stood upon his feet.*' The story does not tell us whether they buried the man notwithstanding he revived and stood upon his feet, or drew him up again. Upon all these stories, the writer of Chronicles is as silent as any writer of the present day, who did not chuse to be accused of *lying*, or at least of romancing, would be about stories of the same kind.

" But, however these two historians may differ from each other, with respect to the tales related by either, they are silent alike with respect to those men styled prophets, whose writings fill up the latter part of the Bible. Isaiah, who lived in the time of Hezekiah, is mentioned in Kings, and again in Chronicles, when these historians are speaking of that reign ; but except in one or two instances at most, and those very slightly, none of the rest are so much as spoken of, or even their existence hinted at ; though, according to the Bible chronology, they lived within the time those histories were written ; some of them long before. If those prophets, as they are called, were men of such importance in their day, as the compilers of the Bible, and priests, and commentators have since represented them to be, how can it be accounted for, that not one of these histories should say any thing about them ?

" The history of the books of Kings and of Chronicles is brought forward, as I have already said, to the year 588 before Christ ; it will therefore be proper to examine, which of these prophets lived before that period.

" Here follows a table of all the prophets, with the times in which they lived before Christ, according to the Chronology affixed to the first chapter of each of the books of the prophets ; and also of the number of years they lived before the books of Kings and Chronicles were written."

Gentlemen, I need not read the Table which follows, it is a " Table of the Prophets, with the times in which they lived before Christ, and also before the Books of Kings and Chronicles were written:" you have copies of the Table in the volume before you, and I need not occupy your attention with its recital.

" This table is either not very honourable for the Bible historians, or not very honourable for the Bible prophets ; and I leave to priests, and commentators, who are very learned in little things, to settle the point of *etiquette* between the two ; and to assign a reason, why the authors of Kings and Chronicles have treated those

prophets, whom in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have considered as poets, with as much degrading silence as any historian of the present day would treat Peter Pindar.

“ I have one observation more to make on the book of Chronicles; after which I shall pass on to review the remaining books of the Bible.

“ In my observations on the book of Genesis, I have quoted a passage from the 36th chapter, verse 31, which evidently refers to a time, *after* that kings began to reign over the children of Israel; and I have shewn that as this verse is verbatim the same as in Chronicles, chap. i. ver. 43, where it stands consistently with the order of history, which in Genesis it does not, the verse in Genesis, and a great part of the 36th chapter, have been taken from Chronicles; and that the book of Genesis, though it is placed first in the Bible, and ascribed to Moses, has been manufactured by some unknown person, after the book of Chronicles was written, which was not until at least eight hundred and sixty years after the time of Moses.

The evidence I proceed by to substantiate this is regular, and has in it but two stages. First, as I have already stated, that the passage in Genesis refers itself for *time* to Chronicles; secondly, that the book of Chronicles, to which this passage refers itself, was not *begun* to be written until at least eight hundred and sixty years after the time of Moses. To prove this, we have only to look into the thirteenth verse of the third chapter of the first book of Chronicles, where the writer, in giving the genealogy of the descendants of David, mentions Zedekiah; and it was in the time of Zedekiah, that Nebuchadnezzar conquered Jerusalem, 588 years before Christ, and consequently more than 860 years after Moses. Those who have superstitiously boasted of the antiquity of the Bible, and particularly of the books ascribed to Moses, have done it without examination, and without any other authority than that of one credulous man telling it to another; for, so far as historical and chronological evidence applies, the very first book in the Bible is not so ancient as the book of Homer, by more than three hundred years, and is about the same age with Æsop's Fables.

“ I am not contending for the morality of Homer; on the contrary, I think it a book of false glory, tending to inspire immoral and mischievous notions of honour; and with respect to Æsop, though the moral is in general just, the fable is often cruel: and the cruelty of the fable does more injury to the heart, especially in a child, than the moral does good to the judgment.

“ Having now dismissed Kings and Chronicles, I come to the next in course, the book of Ezra.

“ As one proof, among others, I shall produce, to shew the disorder in which this pretended word of God, the Bible, has been put together, and the uncertainty of who the authors were, we have only to look at the three first verses in Ezra, and the two last in Chronicles; for by what kind of cutting and shuffling has it been,

that the three first verses in Ezra should be the two last verses in Chronicles, or that the two last in Chronicles should be the three first in Ezra? Either the authors did not know their own works, or the compilers did not know the authors.

“ Two last Verses of Chronicles. “ Three first Verses of Ezra.

‘ Ver. 22. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord, spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

‘ 23. Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, All the kingdoms of the earth hath the Lord God of heaven given me, and he hath charged me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of his people? the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up.’

‘ Ver. 1. Now in the first year of Cyrus, king of Persia, that the word of the Lord, by the mouth of Jeremiah, might be fulfilled, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying,

‘ 2. Thus saith Cyrus, king of Persia, The Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah.

‘ 3. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the Lord God of Israel (he is the God) which is in the Jerusalem.’

“ The last verse in Chronicles is broken abruptly, and ends in the middle of a phrase with the word up, without signifying to what place. This abrupt break, and the appearance of the same verses in different books, shew, as I have already said, the disorder and ignorance in which the Bible has been put together, and that the compilers of it had no authority for what they were doing, nor we any authority for believing what they have done*.

* I observed, as I passed along, several broken and senseless passages in the Bible, without thinking them of consequence enough to be introduced in the body of the work; such as that, 1 Samuel, chap. xiii. ver. 1, where it is said, ‘ Saul reigned one year; and when he had reigned two years over Israel, Saul chose him three thousand men,’ &c. The first part of the verse, that Saul reigned one year, has no sense, since it does not tell us what Saul did, nor say any thing of what happened at the end of that one year; and it is, besides, mere absurdity to say he reigned one year, when the very next phrase says he had reigned two; for if he had reigned two, it was impossible not to have reigned one.

“ Another instance occurs in Joshua, chap. v. where the writer tells us a story of an angel (for such the table of contents, at the head of the chapter, calls him) appearing unto Joshua; and the story ends abruptly, and without any conclusion.

"The only thing that has any appearance of certainty in the book of Ezra, is the time in which it was written, which was immediately after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian captivity, about 536 years before Christ. Ezra (who, according to the Jewish commentators, is the same person as is called Esdras in the Apocrypha) was one of the persons who returned, and who, it is probable, wrote the account of that affair. Nehemiah, whose book follows next to Ezra, was another of the returned persons; and who, it is also probable, wrote the account of the same affair, in the book that bears his name. But those accounts are nothing to us, nor to any other persons, unless it be to the Jews, as a part of the history of their nation; and there is just as much of the word of God in those books as there is in any of the histories of France, or Rapiu's History of England, or the history of any other country.

"But even in matters of historical record, neither of those writers are to be depended upon. In the second chapter of Ezra, the writer gives a list of the tribes and families, and of the precise number of souls of each that returned from Babylon to Jerusalem; and this enrolment of the persons so returned, appears to have been one of the principal objects for writing the book; but in this there is an error that destroys the intention of the undertaking.

"The writer begins his enrolment in the following manner: chap. ii. ver. 3, 'The children of Parosh, two thousand one hundred seventy and four.' Verse 4, 'The children of Shephatiah, three hundred seventy and two.' And in this manner he proceeds through all the families; and in the 64th verse, he makes a total,

The story is as follows:---Ver. 13, 'And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold there stood a man over against him with his sword drawn in his hand; and Joshua went unto him, and said unto him, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries?' Verse 14, 'And he said, Nay; but as captain of the hosts of the Lord am I now come. And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and did worship, and said unto him, What saith my Lord unto his servant?' Verse 15, 'And the captain of the Lord's host said unto Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy. And Joshua did so.'---And what then? nothing: for here the story ends, and the chapter too.

"Either this story is broken off in the middle, or it is a story told by some Jewish humourist, in ridicule of Joshua's pretended mission from God; and the compilers of the Bible, not perceiving the design of the story, have told it as a serious matter. As a story of humour and ridicule, it has a great deal of point; for it pompously introduces an angel in the figure of a man, with a drawn sword in his hand, before whom Joshua falls on his face to the earth, and worships (which is contrary to their second commandment); and then, this most important embassy from heaven ends, in telling Joshua to pull off his shoe. It might as well have told him to pull up his breeches.

"It is certain, however, that the Jews did not credit every thing their leaders told them, as appears from the cavalier manner in which they speak of Moses, when he was gone into the mount. 'As for this Moses, say they, we wot not what is become of him.' Exod. chap. x. xxii. ver. 1."

and says, the whole congregation together was *forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.*"

(The Attorney-General here smiled significantly at Mr. Serjeant Copley.) Mr. Carlile proceeded.

"But whoever will take the trouble of casting up the several particulars, will find that the total is but 29,818; so that the error is 12,542. What certainty then can there be in the Bible for any thing?"

"Nehemiah, in like manner, gives a list of the returned families, and of the number of each family. He begins as in Ezra, by saying, chap. vii. ver. 8, 'The children of Parosh, two thousand three hundred and seventy-two;' and so on through all the families. The list differs in several of the particulars from that of Ezra. In the 66th verse, Nehemiah makes a total, and says, as Ezra had said, 'The whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.' But the particulars of this list make a total but of 31,089, so that the error here is 11,271. These writers may do well enough for Bible-makers, but not for any thing where truth and exactness is necessary. The next book in course is the book of Esther. If Madam Esther thought it any honour to offer herself as a kept mistress to Ahasuerus, or as a rival to Queen Vashty, who had refused to come to a drunken king, in the midst of a drunken company, to be made a show of, (for the account says, they had been drinking seven days, and were merry,) let Esther and Mordecai look to that, it is no business of ours; at least, it is none of mine; besides which, the story has a great deal the appearance of being fabulous, and is also anonymous. I pass on to the book of Job.

"The book of Job differs in character from all the books we have hitherto passed over. Treachery and murder make no part of this book; it is the meditations of a mind strongly impressed with the vicissitudes of human life, and by turns sinking under, and struggling against the pressure. It is a highly wrought composition, between willing submission and involuntary discontent; and shews man, as he sometimes is, more disposed to be resigned than he is capable of being. Patience has but a small share in the character of the person of whom the book treats; on the contrary, his grief is often impetuous; but he still endeavours to keep a guard upon it, and seems determined, in the midst of accumulating ills, to impose upon himself the hard duty of contentment.

"I have spoken in a respectful manner of the book of Job in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, but without knowing at that time what I have learned since; which is, that from all the evidence that can be collected, the book of Job does not belong to the Bible.

"I have seen the opinion of two Hebrew commentators, Abenezra and Spinosa, upon this subject; they both say that the book of Job carries no internal evidence of being an Hebrew book; that

the genius of the composition, and the drama of the piece, are not Hebrew; that it has been translated from another language into Hebrew, and that the author of the book was a Gentile; that the character represented under the name of Satan (which is the first and only time this name is mentioned in the Bible) does not correspond to any Hebrew idea; and that the two convocations which the Deity is supposed to have made of those, whom the poem calls sons of God, and the familiarity which this supposed Satan is stated to have with the Deity, are in the same case.

"It may also be observed, that the book shews itself to be the production of a mind cultivated in science, which the Jews, so far from being famous for, were very ignorant of. The allusions to objects of natural philosophy are frequent and strong, and are of a different cast to any thing in the books known to be Hebrew. The astronomical names, Pleiades, Orion, and Arcturus are Greek, and not Hebrew names; and as it does not appear from any thing that is to be found in the Bible, that the Jews knew any thing of astronomy, or that they studied it, they had no translation of those names into their own language, but adopted the names as they found them in the poem."

Now, Gentlemen, so little doubt does there exist of the book of Job being a drama, and originally written as such, and acted, as a drama, in Persia to this day, that a Persian copy of it, in that shape, is at present to be found in the library of the East India Company.

"That the Jews did translate the literary productions of the Gentile nations into the Hebrew language, and mix them with their own, is not a matter of doubt; the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs is an evidence of this; it is there said, ver. 1, '*The word of king Lemuel, the prophecy which his mother taught him.*' This verse stands as a preface to the proverbs that follow, and which are not the proverbs of Solomon, but of Lemuel; and this Lemuel was not one of the kings of Israel, nor of Judah, but of some other country, and consequently a Gentile. The Jews, however, have adopted his proverbs, and as they cannot give any account who the author of the book of Job was, nor how they came by the book; and as it differs in character from the Hebrew writings, and stands totally unconnected with every other book and chapter in the Bible before it, and after it, it has all the circumstantial evidence of being originally a book of the Gentiles.*

* "The prayer known by the name of *Agur's prayer*, in the 30th chapter of Proverbs, immediately preceding the proverbs of Lemuel, and which is the only sensible, well-conceived, and well-expressed prayer in the Bible, has much the appearance of being a prayer taken from the Gentiles. The name of Agur occurs on no other occasion than this; and he is introduced, together with the prayer ascribed to him, in the same manner, and nearly in the same words, that Lemuel and his proverbs are introduced in the chapter that follows. The first verse of the 30th chapter says, '*The words of Agur, the son of Iakch, even the prophecy;*'

"The Bible-makers, and those regulators of time, the Bible chronologists, appear to have been at a loss where to place, and how to dispose of the book of Job; for it contains no one historical circumstance, nor allusion to any, that might serve to determine its place in the Bible. But it would not have answered the purpose of these men to have informed the world of their ignorance; and therefore they have affixed it to the æra of 1520 years before Christ, which is during the time the Israelites were in Egypt, and for which they have just as much authority and no more than I should have for saying it was a thousand years before that period. The probability, however, is, that it is older than any book in the Bible; and it is the only one that can be read without indignation or disgust.

"We know nothing of what the ancient Gentile world (as it is called) was before the time of the Jews, whose practice has been to calumniate and blacken the character of all other nations; and it is from the Jewish accounts that we have learned to call them heathens. But as far as we know to the contrary, they were a just and moral people, and not addicted, like the Jews, to cruelty and revenge, but of whose profession of faith we are unacquainted. It appears to have been their custom to personify both virtue and vice by statues and images, as is done now-a-days both by statuary and by painting; but it does not follow from this, that they worshipped them any more than we do. I pass on to the Book of

"*Psalms*, of which it is not necessary to make much observation. Some of them are moral, and others are very revengeful; and the greater part relate to certain local circumstances of the Jewish nation at the time they were written, with which we have nothing to do. It is, however, an error or an imposition to call them the *Psalms of David*: they are a collection, as song-books are now-a-days, from different song-writers, who lived at different times. The 137th Psalm could not have been written till more than 400 years after the time of David, because it is written in commemoration of an event, the captivity of the Jews in Babylon, which did not happen till that distance of time. '*By the rivers of Babylon we sat down; yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows, in the midst thereof; for there they that carried us away captive, required of us a song, saying, sing us one of the songs of Zion.*' As a man would say

here the word prophecy is used with the same application it has in the following chapter of Lemuel, unconnected with any thing of prediction. The prayer of Agur is in the 8th and 9th verses, '*Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither riches nor poverty, but feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.*' This has not any of the marks of being a Jewish prayer, for the Jews never prayed but when they were in trouble, and never for any thing but victory, vengeance, and riches.

to an American, or to a Frenchman, or to an Englishman, sing us one of your American songs, or your French songs, or your English songs. This remark with respect to the time this Psalm was written, is of no other use than to shew (among others already mentioned) the general imposition the world has been under, with respect to the authors of the Bible. No regard has been paid to time, place, and circumstance; and the names of persons have been affixed to the several books, which it was as impossible they should write, as that a man should walk in procession at his own funeral.

“ *The Book of Proverbs.* These, like the Psalms, are a collection, and that from authors belonging to other nations than those of the Jewish nation, as I have shewn in the observations upon the Book of Job; besides which, some of the proverbs ascribed to Solomon, did not appear till two hundred and fifty years after the death of Solomon; for it is said in the 1st verse of the 25th chapter, ‘*These are also proverbs of Solomon, which the men of Hezekiah, king of Judah, copied out.*’ It was two hundred and fifty years from the time of Solomon to the time of Hezekiah. When a man is famous and his name is abroad, he is made the putative father of things he never said or did; and this, most probably, has been the case with Solomon. It appears to have been the fashion of that day to make proverbs, as it is now to make jest books, and father them upon those who never saw them.

“ *The Book of Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,* is also ascribed to Solomon, and that with much reason, if not with truth. It is written as the solitary reflections of a worn-out debauchee, such as Solomon was, who looking back on scenes he can no longer enjoy, cries out, *All is vanity!* A great deal of the metaphor and of the sentiment is obscure, most probably by translation; but enough is left to shew they were strongly pointed in the original. From what is transmitted to us of the character of Solomon, he was witty, ostentatious, dissolute, and at last melancholy. He lived fast, and died, tired of the world, at the age of fifty-eight years.

“ Seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, are worse than none; and however it may carry with it the appearance of heightened enjoyment, it defeats all the felicity of affection, by leaving it no point to fix upon: divided love is never happy. This was the case with Solomon; and if he could not, with all his pretensions to wisdom, discover it beforehand, he merited, unpitied, the mortification he afterwards endured. In this point of view, his preaching is unnecessary, because, to know the consequences, it is only necessary to know the cause. Seven hundred wives, and three hundred concubines, would have stood in place of the whole book. It was needless after this to say, that all was vanity and vexation of spirit; for it is impossible to derive happiness from the company of those whom we deprive of happiness.

“ To be happy in old age, it is necessary that we accustom ourselves to objects that can accompany the mind all the way through

life, and that we take the rest as good in their day. The mere man of pleasure is miserable in old age ; and the mere drudge in business is but little better : whereas, natural philosophy, mathematical and mechanical science, are a continual source of tranquil pleasure ; and in spite of the gloomy dogmas of priests, and of superstition, the study of those things is the study of the true theology ; it teaches man to know and to admire the Creator, for the principles of science are in the creation, and are unchangeable, and of divine origin.

“ Those who knew Benjamin Franklin will recollect, that his mind was ever young ; his temper ever serene : science, that never grows grey, was always his mistress. He was never without an object, for when we cease to have an object, we become like an invalid in an hospital waiting for death.

“ Solomon's Songs are amorous and foolish enough, but which wrinkled fanaticism has called divine. The compilers of the Bible have placed these songs after the book of Ecclesiastes ; and the chronologists have affixed to them the æra of 1014 years before Christ, at which time Solomon, according to the same chronology, was nineteen years of age, and was then forming his seraglio of wives and concubines. The Bible-makers and the chronologists should have managed this matter a little better, and either have said nothing about the time, or chosen a time less inconsistent with the supposed divinity of those songs ; for Solomon was then in the honey-moon of one thousand debaucheries.

“ It should also have occurred to them, that as he wrote, if he did write, the book of Ecclesiastes, long after these songs, and in which he exclaims, that all is vanity and vexation of spirit ; that he included those songs in that description. This is the more probable, because he says, or somebody for him, Ecclesiastes, chap. ii. ver. 8, *‘ I got me men singers, and women singers, (most probably to sing those songs) and musical instruments of all sorts ; and behold (ver. 11.) all was vanity and vexation of spirit. ’* The compilers, however, have done their work but by halves ; for as they have given us the songs, they should have given us the tunes, that we might sing them.

“ The books, called the books of the Prophets, fill up all the remaining part of the Bible ; they are sixteen in number, beginning with Isaiah, and ending with Malachi ; of which I have given you a list, in the observations upon Chronicles. Of these sixteen prophets, all of whom, except the three last, lived within the time the books of Kings and Chronicles were written ; two only, Isaiah and Jeremiah, are mentioned in the history of those books. I shall begin with those two, reserving what I have to say on the general character of the men called prophets to another part of the work.

“ Whoever will take the trouble of reading the book ascribed to Isaiah, will find it one of the most wild and disorderly compositions ever put together ; it has neither beginning, middle, nor end ; and, except a short historical part, and a few sketches of

history in two or three of the first chapters, is one continued, incoherent, bombastical rant, full of extravagant metaphor, without application, and destitute of meaning; a school-boy would scarcely have been excusable for writing such stuff; it is (at least in translation) that kind of composition and false taste, that is properly called prose run mad.

"The historical part begins at the 36th chapter, and is continued to the end of the 39th chapter. It relates to some matters that are said to have passed during the reign of Hezekiah, king of Judah, at which time Isaiah lived. This fragment of history begins and ends abruptly; it has not the least connection with the chapter that precedes it, nor with that which follows it, nor with any other in the book. It is probable that Isaiah wrote this fragment himself, because he was an actor in the circumstances it treats of; but, except this part, there are scarcely two chapters that have any connection with each other: one is entitled, at the beginning of the first verse, the burden of Babylon; another, the burden of Moab; another, the burden of Damascus; another, the burden of Egypt; another, the burden of the Desert of the Sea; another, the burden of the Valley of Vision; as you would say, the story of the Knight of the Burning Mountain, the story of Cinderella, or the Children in the Wood, &c. &c.

"I have already shewn, in the instance of the two last verses of Chronicles, and the three first in Ezra, that the compilers of the Bible mixed and confounded the writings of different authors with each other, which alone, were there no other cause, is sufficient to destroy the authenticity of any compilation, because it is more than presumptive evidence that the compilers are ignorant who the authors were. A very glaring instance of this occurs in the book ascribed to Isaiah; the latter part of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th, so far from having been written by Isaiah, could only have been written by some person who lived, at least, an hundred and fifty years after Isaiah was dead.

"These chapters are a compliment to *Cyrus*, who permitted the Jews to return to Jerusalem from the Babylonian captivity, to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, as is stated in Ezra. The last verse of the 44th chapter, and the beginning of the 45th, are in the following words; *'That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure; even saying to Jerusalem, thou shalt be built; and to the temple thy foundations shall be laid: thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him, and I will loose the loins of kings to open before him, the two-leaved gates, and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, &c.'*

"What audacity of church and priestly ignorance it is to impose this book upon the world as the writing of Isaiah, when Isaiah, according to their own chronology, died soon after the death of Hezekiah, which was 696 years before Christ; and the decree of Cyrus, in favour of the Jews returning to Jerusalem, was,

according to the same chronology, 536 years before Christ; which was a distance of time between the two of 162 years. I do not suppose that the compilers of the Bible made these books, but rather that they picked up some loose, anonymons essays, and put them together under the names of such authors as best suited their purpose. They have encouraged the imposition, which is next to inventing it; for it was impossible but they must have observed it.

“When we see the studied craft of the scripture-makers, in making every part of this romantic book of school-boy’s eloquence, bend to the monstrous idea of a Son of God, begotten by a ghost on the body of a virgin, there is no imposition we are not justified in suspecting them of. Every phrase and circumstance is marked with the barbarous hand of superstitious torture, and forced into meanings it was impossible they could have. The head of every chapter, and the top of every page, are blazoned with the names of Christ and the church, that the unwary reader might suck in the error before he began to read.

“*Behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son*, Isaiah, chap. vii. ver. 14, has been interpreted to mean the person called Jesus Christ, and his mother Mary, and has been echoed through christendom for more than a thousand years: and such has been the rage of this opinion, that scarcely a spot in it but has been stained with blood and marked with desolation in consequence of it. Though it is not my intention to enter into controversy on subjects of this kind, but to confine myself to shew that the Bible is spurious; and thus, by taking away the foundation, to overthrow at once the whole structure of superstition raised thereon; I will, however, stop a moment to expose the fallacious application of this passage.

“Whether Isaiah was playing a trick with Ahaz, king of Judah, to whom this passage is spoken, is no business of mine; I mean only to shew the misapplication of the passage, and that it has no more reference to Christ and his mother than it has to me and my mother. The story is simply thus:

“The king of Syria and the king of Israel (I have already mentioned that the Jews were split into two nations, one of which was called Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem, and the other Israel) made war jointly against Ahaz, king of Judah, and marched their armies towards Jerusalem. Ahaz and his people became alarmed, and the account says, ver. 2. ‘*Their hearts were moved as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.*’

“In this situation of things, Isaiah addresses himself to Ahaz, and assures him in the *name of the Lord* (the cant phrase of all the prophets) that these two kings should not succeed against him; and to satisfy Ahaz that this should be the case, tells him to ask a sign. This, the account says, Ahaz declined doing; giving as a reason that he would not tempt the Lord; upon which Isaiah,

who is the speaker, says, ver. 14, ‘ Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; *behold a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son*; and the 16th verse says, ‘ *And before this child shall know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good*, the land which thou abhorrest or darest (meaning Syria and the kingdom of Israel) shall be forsaken of both her kings.’ Here then was the sign, and the time limited for the completion of the assurance or promise: namely, before this child should know to refuse the evil, and chuse the good.

“ Isaiah having committed himself thus far, it became necessary to him, in order to avoid the imputation of being a false prophet, and the consequence thereof, to take measures to make this sign appear. It certainly was not a difficult thing, in any time of the world, to find a girl with child, or to make her so; and perhaps Isaiah knew of one before-hand; for I do not suppose that the prophets of that day were any more to be trusted than the priests of this: be that however as it may, he says in the next chapter, ver. 2, ‘ And I took unto me faithful witnesses to record, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, and *I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son.*’

“ Here then is the whole story, foolish as it is, of this child and this virgin; and it is upon the bare-faced perversion of this story, that the book of Matthew, and the impudence and sordid interests of priests in latter times, have founded a theory which they call the gospel; and have applied this story to signify the person they call Jesus Christ; begotten, they say, by a ghost, whom they call holy, on the body of a woman, engaged in marriage, and afterwards married, whom they call a virgin, 700 years after this foolish story was told; a theory which, speaking for myself, I hesitate not to believe, and to say, is as fabulous and as false as God is true.

“ But to shew the imposition and falsehood of Isaiah, we have only to attend to the sequel of this story; which, though it is passed over in silence in the book of Isaiah, is related in the 28th chapter of the 2d Chronicles; and which is, that instead of these two kings failing in their attempt against Ahaz, king of Judah, as Isaiah had pretended to foretel in the name of the Lord, they succeeded; Ahaz was defeated and destroyed; an hundred and twenty thousand of his people were slaughtered; Jerusalem was plundered, and two hundred thousand women, and sons and daughters, carried into captivity. Thus much for this lying prophet and impostor Isaiah, and the book of falsehoods that bears his name. I pass on to the book of

“ Jeremiah. This prophet, as he is called, lived in the time that Nebuchadnezzar besieged Jerusalem, in the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah; and the suspicion was strong against him, that he was a traitor in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar. Every thing relating to Jeremiah shews him to have been a man of

an equivocal character: in his metaphor of the potter and the clay, chap. xviii., he guards his prognostications in such a crafty manner, as always to leave himself a door to escape by in case the event should be contrary to what he had predicted.

"In the 7th and 8th verses of that chapter, he makes the Almighty to say, 'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and destroy it: if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent me of the evil that I thought to do unto them.' Here was a proviso against one side of the case: now for the other side.

"Verses 9 and 10, 'At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice: then I will repent me of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.' Here is a proviso against the other side; and, according to this plan of prophesying, a prophet could never be wrong, however mistaken the Almighty might be. This sort of absurd subterfuge, and this manner of speaking of the Almighty, as one would speak of a man, is consistent with nothing but the stupidity of the Bible

"As to the authenticity of the book, it is only necessary to read it in order to decide positively, that, though some passages recorded therein may have been spoken by Jeremiah, he is not the author of the book. The historical parts, if they can be called by that name, are in the most confused condition: the same events are several times repeated, and that in a manner different, and sometimes in contradiction to each other; and this disorder runs even to the last chapter, where the history, upon which the greater part of the book has been employed, begins a-new, and ends abruptly. The book has all the appearances of being a medley of unconnected anecdotes, respecting persons and things of that time, collected together in the same rude manner as if the various and contradictory accounts, that are to be found in a bundle of newspapers, respecting persons and things of the present day, were put together without date, order, or explanation. I will give two or three examples of this kind.

"It appears, from the account of the 37th chapter, that the army of Nebuchadnezzar, which is called the army of the Chaldeans, had besieged Jerusalem some time; and on their hearing that the army of Pharaoh, of Egypt, was marching against them, they raised the siege, and retreated for a time. It may here be proper to mention, in order to understand this confused history, that Nebuchadnezzar had besieged and taken Jerusalem, during the reign of Jehoiakim, the predecessor of Zedekiah; and that it was Nebuchadnezzar who had made Zedekiah king, or rather viceroy; and that this second siege, of which the book of Jeremiah treats, was in consequence of the revolt of Zedekiah against Nebuchadnezzar. This will, in some measure, account for the suspicion that affixes itself to Jeremiah, of being a traitor, and in the

interest of Nebuchadnezzar; whom Jeremiah calls, in the 43rd chap. ver. 10, the servant of God.

"The 11th verse of this chapter (the 37th) says 'And it came to pass, that, when the army of the Chaldeans was broken up from Jerusalem, for fear of Pharaoh's army, that Jeremiah went forth out of Jerusalem, to go (as this account states) into the land of Benjamin, to separate himself thence in the midst of the people; and when he was in the gate of Benjamin a captain of the ward was there, whose name was Irijah; and he took Jeremiah the prophet, saying, Thou fallest away to the Chaldeans: then Jeremiah said, It is false, I fall not away to the Chaldeans.' Jeremiah being thus stopped and accused, was, after being examined, committed to prison, on suspicion of being a traitor, where he remained, as is stated in the last verse of this chapter.

"But the next chapter gives an account of the imprisonment of Jeremiah, which has no connection with this account, but ascribes his imprisonment to another circumstance, and for which we must go back to the 21st chapter. It is there stated, ver. 1, that Zedekiah sent Pashur, the son of Malchiah, and Zephaniah, the son of Maaseiah the priest, to Jeremiah, to enquire of him concerning Nebuchadnezzar, whose army was then before Jerusalem; and Jeremiah said to them, ver. 8, 'Thus saith the Lord, Behold I set before you the way of life, and the way of death; he that abideth in this city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth out and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey.'

"This interview and conference breaks off abruptly at the end of the 10th verse of the 21st chapter; and such is the disorder of this book, that we have to pass over sixteen chapters, upon various subjects, in order to come at the continuation and event of this conference; and this brings us to the first verse of the 38th chapter, as I have just mentioned.

The 38th chapter opens with saying, 'Then Shephatiah, the son of Mattan; Gedaliah, the son of Pashur; and Jucal, the son of Shelemiah; and Pashur, the son of Malechiah; (here are more persons mentioned than in the 21st chapter) heard the words that Jeremiah spoke unto the people, saying *Thus saith the Lord, He that remaineth in this city, shall die by the sword, the famine, and by the pestilence; but he that goeth forth to the Chaldeans shall live, for he shall have his life for a prey, and shall live;* (which are the words of the conference) therefore (say they to Zedekiah) We beseech thee, let this man be put to death, *for thus he weakeneth the hands of the men of war that remain in this city, and the hands of all the people in speaking such words unto them; for this man seeketh not the welfare of the people, but the hurt;*' and at the sixth verse it is said, 'Then they took Jeremiah, and put him into a dungeon of Malchiah.'

"These two accounts are different and contradictory. The one ascribes his imprisonment to his attempt to escape out of the city;

the other to his preaching and prophecy in the city; the one to his being seized by the guard at the gate; the other to his being accused before Zedekiah, by the conferees.*

"In the next chapter (the 39th) we have another instance of the disordered state of this book; for notwithstanding the siege of the city, by Nebuchadnezzar, has been the subject of several of the preceding chapters, particularly the 37th and 38th, the 39th chapter begins as if not a word had been said upon the subject; and as if the reader was to be informed of every particular respecting it; for it begins with saying, ver. 1, *'In the ninth year of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and all his army, against Jerusalem, and besieged it,'* &c. &c.

But the instance in the last chapter (the 52d) is still more glaring; for though the story has been told over and over again, this chapter still supposes the reader not to know any thing of it, for it begins by saying, ver. 1, *'Zedekiah was one and twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned eleven years in Jerusalem, and his mother's name was Humutal, the daughter of Jeremiah, of Libnah, (ver. 4.) And it came to pass, in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, that Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it,'* &c. &c.

"* I observed two chapters 16th and 17th, in the first book of Samuel, that contradict each other with respect to David, and the manner he became acquainted with Saul; as the 37th and 38th chapters of the book of Jeremiah contradict each other with respect to the cause of Jeremiah's imprisonment.

"In the 16th chapter of Samuel, it is said, that an evil spirit of God troubled Saul, and that his servants advised him (as a remedy) 'to seek out a man who was a cunning player upon the harp.' And Saul said, ver. 17, 'Provide now a man that can play well, and bring him unto me.' Then answered one of his servants, and said, 'Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him;' wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, 'Send me David, thy son.' And [verse 21] David came to Saul, and stood before him, and he loved him greatly, and he became his armour-bearer; and when the evil spirit of God was upon Saul, [verse 23] David took his harp, and played with his hand, and Saul was refreshed, and was well.

"But the next chapter [17] gives an account, all different to this, of the manner that Saul and David became acquainted. Here it is ascribed to David's encounter with Goliath, when David was sent by his father to carry provision to his brethren in the camp. In the 55th verse of this chapter it is said, 'And when Saul saw David go forth against the Philistine [Goliath] he said to Abner, the captain of the host, Abner, whose son is this youth? And Abner said, As thy soul liveth, O king, I cannot tell. And the king said, Inquire thou whose son the stripling is. And as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him and brought him before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand; and Saul said unto him, Whose son art thou, thou young man? And David answered, I am the son of thy servant Jesse, the Bethlemite.' These two accounts belie each other, because each of them supposes Saul and David not to have known each other before. This book, the Bible, is too ridiculous even for criticism.

“It is not possible that any one man, and more particularly Jeremiah, could have been the writer of this book. The errors are such as could not have been committed by any person sitting down to compose a work. Were I, or any other man, to write in such a disordered manner, nobody would read what was written; and every body would suppose that the writer was in a state of insanity. The only way, therefore, to account for this disorder is, that the book is a medley of detached unauthenticated anecdotes, put together by some stupid book-maker, under the name of Jeremiah; because many of them refer to him, and to the circumstances of the times he lived in.

“Of the duplicity, and of the false predictions of Jeremiah, I shall mention two instances, and then proceed to review the remainder of the Bible.

“It appears from the 38th chapter, that when Jeremiah was in prison, Zedekiah sent for him, and at this interview, which was private, Jeremiah pressed it strongly on Zedekiah to surrender himself to the enemy. ‘*If, says he, (ver. 17,) thou wilt assuredly go forth unto the king of Babylon’s princes, then thy soul shall live,*’ &c. Zedekiah was apprehensive that what passed at this conference should be known; and he said to Jeremiah (ver. 25.) ‘If the princes (meaning those of Judah) hear that I have talked with thee, and they come unto thee and say unto thee, Declare unto us now what thou hast said unto the king; hide it not from us, and we will not put thee to death; and also what the king said unto thee; then thou shalt say unto them, I presented my supplication before the king; that he would not cause me to return to Jonathan’s house to die there. Then came all the princes unto Jeremiah, and asked him, and *he told them according to all the words the king had commanded.*’ Thus this man of God, as he is called, could tell a lie, or very strongly prevaricate, when he supposed it would answer his purpose: for certainly he did not go to Zedekiah to make his supplication, neither did he make it; he went because he was sent for, and he employed that opportunity to advise Zedekiah to surrender himself to Nebuchadnezzar.

“In the 34th chapter, is a prophecy of Jeremiah to Zedekiah, in these words (ver. 2) ‘Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will give this city into the hands of the king of Babylon, and he will burn it with fire; and thou shalt not escape out of his hand, but that thou shalt surely be taken, and delivered into his hand; and thine eyes shall behold the eyes of the king of Babylon, and he shall speak with thee mouth to mouth, and thou shalt go to Babylon. *Yet hear the word of the Lord; O Zedekiah, king of Judah, thus saith the Lord, Thou shalt not die by the sword, but thou shalt die in peace; and with the burnings of thy fathers, the former kings that were before thee, so shall they burn odours for thee, and they will lament thee, saying, Ah, Lord; for I have pronounced the word, saith the Lord.*’

“Now, instead of Zedekiah beholding the eyes of the king of

Babylon, and speaking with him mouth to mouth, and dying in peace, and with the burning of odours, as at the funeral of his fathers (as Jeremiah had declared the Lord himself had pronounced) the reverse, according to the 52d chapter, was the case; it is there said (ver. 10) 'That the king of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah, before his eyes; then he put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in chains, and carried him to Babylon, and put him in prison till the day of his death.' What then can we say of these prophets, but that they are impostors and liars?

"As for Jeremiah, he experienced none of those evils. He was taken into favour by Nebuchadnezzar, who gave him in charge to the captain of the guard, (chap. xxxix. ver. 12) 'Take him (said he) and look well to him, and do him no harm; but do unto him even as he shall say unto thee.' Jeremiah joined himself afterwards to Nebuchadnezzar, and went about prophesying for him against the Egyptians, who had marched to the relief of Jerusalem while it was besieged. Thus much for another of the lying prophets, and the book that bears his name.

"I have been the more particular in treating of the books ascribed to Isaiah and Jeremiah, because those two are spoken of in the books of Kings and of Chronicles, which the others are not. The remainder of the books ascribed to the men called prophets, I shall not trouble myself much about; but take them collectively into the observations I shall offer on the character of the men styled prophets.

"In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have said that the word prophet was the Bible-word for poet, and that the flights and metaphors of the Jewish poets have been foolishly erected into what are now called prophecies. I am sufficiently justified in this opinion, not only because the books called the prophecies are written in poetical language, but because there is no word in the Bible, except it be the word prophet, that describes what we mean by a poet. I have also said, that the word signifies a performer upon musical instruments, of which I have given some instances; such as that of a company of prophets prophesying with psalteries, with tabrets, with pipes, with harps, &c. and that Saul prophesied with them, 1 Sam. chap. x. ver. 5. It appears from this passage, and from other parts in the book of Samuel, that the word prophet was confined to signify poetry and music; for the person who was supposed to have a visionary insight into concealed things, was not a prophet but a *seer** (1 Sam. chap. ix. ver. 9); and it was not till after the word *seer* went out of use (which most probably was when Saul banished those he called wizards) that the profession of the seer, or the art of seeing, became incorporated into the word prophet.

"According to the modern meaning of the word prophet and prophesying, it signifies foretelling events to a great distance of time;

* I know not what is the Hebrew word that corresponds to the word seer in English; but I observe it is translated into French by *La Voyant*, from the verb *voir* to see; and which means the person who sees, or the seer."

and it became necessary to the inventors of the gospel to give it this latitude of meaning, in order to apply or to stretch what they call the prophecies of the Old Testament, to the times of the New; but according to the Old Testament, the prophesying of the seer, and afterwards of the prophet, so far as the meaning of the word seer was incorporated into that of prophet, had reference only to things of the time then passing, or very closely connected with it; such as the event of a battle they were going to engage in, or of a journey, or of any enterprise they were going to undertake, or of any circumstance then pending, or of any difficulty they were then in; all of which had immediate reference to themselves (as in the case already mentioned of Ahaz and Isaiah with respect to the expression, *Behold a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*) and not to any distant future time. It was that kind of prophesying that corresponds to what we call fortune-telling; such as casting nativities, predicting riches, fortunate or unfortunate marriages, conjuring for lost goods, &c.; and it is the fraud of the Christian church, not that of the Jews; and the ignorance and the superstition of modern, not that of ancient times, that elevated those poetical—musical—conjuring—dreaming—strolling gentry, into the rank they have since had.

“But, besides this general character of all the prophets, they had also a particular character. They were in parties, and they prophesied for or against, according to the party they were with; as the poetical and political writers of the present day write in defence of the party they associate with against the other.

“After the Jews were divided into two nations, that of Judah and that of Israel, each party had its prophets, who abused and accused each other of being false prophets, lying prophets, impostors, &c.

“The prophets of the party of Judah prophesied against the prophets of the party of Israel; and those of the party of Israel against those of Judah. This party prophesying shewed itself immediately on the separation under the first two rival kings Rehoboam and Jeroboam. The prophet that cursed, or prophesied, against the altar that Jeroboam had built in Bethel, was of the party of Judah, where Rehoboam was king; and he was way-laid, on his return home, by a prophet of the party of Israel, who said unto him, (1 Kings, chap. x.) ‘*Art thou the man of God that came from Judah? and he said ‘I am.’* Then the prophet of the party of Israel said to him, ‘*I am a prophet also, as thou art* (signifying of Judah,) *and an angel spake unto me by the word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee unto thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water: but* (says the 18th verse,) *he lied unto him.*’ The event, however, according to the story, is, that the prophet of Judah never got back to Judah, for he was found dead on the road, by the contrivance of the prophet of Israel, who, no doubt, was called a true prophet by his own party, and the prophet of Judah a lying prophet.

“In the third chapter of the second of Kings, a story is related

of prophesying or conjuring, that shews, in several particulars, the character of a prophet. Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and Joram, king of Israel, had for a while ceased their party animosity, and entered into an alliance; and these two, together with the king of Edom, engaged in a war against the king of Moab. After uniting, and marching their armies, the story says, they were in great distress for water, upon which Jehoshaphat said, *'Is there not here a prophet of the Lord, that we may enquire of the Lord by him? and one of the servants of the king of Israel said, here is Elisha.'* (Elisha was of the party of Judah.) *And Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, said, the word of the Lord is with him.* The story then says, that these three kings went down to Elisha; and when Elisha (who, as I have said, was a Judahmite prophet) saw the king of Israel, he said unto him, *'What have I to do with thee, get thee to the prophets of thy father and the prophets of thy mother. Nay but, said the king of Israel, the Lord hath called these three kings together, to deliver them into the hand of the king of Moab,'* (meaning because of the distress they were in for water); upon which Elisha said; *'As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, I would not look towards thee, nor see thee.'* Here is all the venom and vulgarity of a party prophet. We have now to see the performance, or manner of prophesying.

" Ver. 15. *'Bring me,* said Elisha, *a minstrel: and it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.'* Here is the farce of the conjuror. Now for the prophecy: *'And Elisha said,* (singing most probably to the tune he was playing) *Thus saith the Lord, Make this valley full of ditches;'* which was just telling them what every countryman could have told them, without either fiddle or farce, that the way to get water was to dig for it.

" But as every conjuror is not famous alike for the same thing, so neither were those prophets; for though all of them, at least, those I have spoken of, were famous for lying, some of them excelled in cursing. Elisha, whom I have just mentioned, was a chief in this branch of prophesying; it was he that cursed the forty-two children in the name of the Lord, whom the two she-bears came and devoured. We are to suppose that those children were of the party of Israel; but as those who will curse will lie, there is just as much credit to be given to this story of Elisha's two she-bears as there is to that of the Dragon of Wantley, of whom it is said:—

Poor children three devoured he,
That could not with him grapple;
And at one sup he eat them up,
As a man would eat an apple.

" There was another description of men called prophets, that amused themselves with dreams and visions; but whether by night or by day, we know not. These, if they were not quite harmless, were but little mischievous. Of this class are

"Ezekiel and Daniel; and the first question upon those books, as upon all the others, is, Are they genuine? that is, were they written by Ezekiel and Daniel?

"Of this there is no proof; but so far as my own opinion goes, I am more inclined to believe they were, than that they were not. My reasons for this opinion are as follow: First, Because those books do not contain internal evidence to prove they were not written by Ezekiel and Daniel, as the books ascribed to Moses, Joshua, Samuel, &c. &c. prove they were not written by Moses, Joshua, Samuel, &c.

Secondly, Because they were not written till after the Babylonish captivity began; and there is good reason to believe, that not any book in the Bible was written before that period: at least, it is proveable, from the books themselves, as I have already shewn, that they were not written till after the commencement of the Jewish monarchy.

"Thirdly, Because the manner in which the books ascribed to Ezekiel and Daniel are written, agrees with the condition these men were in at the time of writing them.

"Had the numerous commentators and priests, who have foolishly employed or wasted their time in pretending to expound and unriddle those books, been carried into captivity, as Ezekiel and Daniel were, it would have greatly improved their intellects, in comprehending the reason for this mode of writing, and have saved them the trouble of racking their invention, as they have done, to no purpose; for they would have found that themselves would be obliged to write whatever they had to write, respecting their own affairs, or those of their friends, or of their country, in a concealed manner, as these men have done.

"These two books differ from all the rest; for it is only those that are filled with accounts of dreams and visions; and this difference arose from the situation the writers were in as prisoners of war, or prisoners of state, in a foreign country, which obliged them to convey even the most trifling information to each other, and all their political projects or opinions, in obscure and metaphorical terms. They pretend to have dreamed dreams, and seen visions, because it was unsafe for them to speak facts or plain language. We ought, however, to suppose, that the persons to whom they wrote understood what they meant, and that it was not intended any body else should. But these busy commentators and priests have been puzzling their wits to find out what it was not intended they should know, and with which they have nothing to do.

"Ezekiel and Daniel were carried prisoners to Babylon, under the first captivity, in the time of Jehoiakim, nine years before the second captivity in the time of Zedekiah. The Jews were then still numerous, and had considerable force at Jerusalem; and as it is natural to suppose that men, in the situation of Ezekiel and Daniel, would be meditating the recovery of their country, and their own deliverance, it is reasonable to suppose, that the accounts of dreams and visions, with which these books are filled, are no other than a

disguised mode of correspondence, to facilitate those objects: it served them as a cypher, or secret alphabet. If they are not this, they are tales, reveries, and nonsense; or at least, a fanciful way of wearing off the wearisomeness of captivity; but the presumption is, they are the former.

While Mr. Carlile was reading this paragraph, the Chief Justice ordered candles to be brought into the Court. While the candles were preparing, he addressed the Chief Justice as follows:

My Lord, I wish your Lordship would relieve me by adjourning the Court until to-morrow morning, for I feel exhausted, and find I cannot proceed much further.

Chief Justice.—I cannot yet adjourn the Court; but you can retire for a few minutes, and take some refreshment.

Mr. Carlile then withdrew with a few friends. Candles were introduced at half past five; the law-officers of the Crown appeared in close conversation, and after an absence of about five minutes, Mr. Carlile returned, and was about to proceed, when

The *Chief Justice* observed, that one of the Jury was absent from the box, although within hearing, and that the Defendant had better wait until he was in his place. On the return of this Jurymen, he proceeded:—

“Ezekiel begins his book by speaking of a vision of *cherubims*, and of a vision of a *wheel within a wheel*, which he says he saw by the river Chebar, in the land of his captivity. Is it not reasonable to suppose, that by the cherubims he meant the temple at Jerusalem, where they had figures of cherubims? and by a wheel within a wheel (which, as a figure, has always been understood to signify political contrivance) the project or means of recovering Jerusalem? In the latter part of his book, he supposes himself transported to Jerusalem, and into the temple; and he refers back to the vision on the river Chebar, and says (chap. xliii. ver. 3,) that this last vision was like the vision on the river Chebar; which indicates, that those pretended dreams and visions had for their object the recovery of Jerusalem, and nothing further.

“As to the romantic interpretations and applications, wild as the dreams and visions they undertake to explain, which commentators and priests have made of those books, that of converting them into things which they call prophecies, and making them bend to times and circumstances, as far remote even as the present day, it shews the fraud or the extreme folly to which credulity or priestcraft can go.

“Scarcely any thing can be more absurd, than to suppose that men situated as Ezekiel and Daniel were, whose country was overrun, and in the possession of the enemy, all their friends and rela-

tions in captivity abroad, or in slavery at home, or massacred, or in continual danger of it; scarcely any thing, I say, can be more absurd, than to suppose that such men should find nothing to do but that of employing their time and their thoughts about what was to happen to other nations a thousand or two thousand years after they were dead; at the same time, nothing is more natural, than that they should meditate the recovery of Jerusalem, and their own deliverance; and that this was the sole object of all the obscure and apparently frantic writings contained in those books.

"In this sense, the mode of writing used in those two books being forced by necessity, and not adopted by choice, is not irrational; but if we are to use the books as prophecies, they are false. In the 29th chapter of Ezekiel, speaking of Egypt, it is said, (ver. 11,) '*No foot of man should pass through it, nor foot of beast should pass through it; neither shall it be inhabited for forty years.*' This is what never came to pass, and consequently it is false, as all the books I have already viewed are. I here close this part of the subject.

"In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have spoken of Jonah, and of the story of him and the whale. A fit story for ridicule, if it was written to be believed; or of laughter, if it was intended to try what credulity could swallow; for if it could swallow Jonah and the whale, it could swallow any thing.

"But, as is already shewn in the observations on the book of Job, and of Proverbs, it is not always certain which of the books in the Bible are originally Hebrew, or only translations from books of the Gentiles into Hebrew; and as the book of Jonah, so far from treating of the affairs of the Jews, says nothing upon that subject, but treats altogether of the Gentiles, it is more probable that it is a book of the Gentiles than of the Jews; and that it has been written as a fable, to expose the nonsense and satirize the vicious and malignant character of a Bible prophet, or a predicting priest.

"Jonah is represented, first, as a disobedient prophet, running away from his mission, and taking shelter aboard a vessel of the Gentiles, bound from Joppa to Tarshish; as if he ignorantly supposed, by such a paltry contrivance, he could hide himself where God could not find him. The vessel is overtaken by a storm at sea; and the mariners, all of whom are Gentiles, believing it to be a judgment, on account of some one on board who had committed a crime, agreed to cast lots, to discover the offender; and the lot fell upon Jonah. But, before this, they had cast all their wares and merchandize overboard, to lighten the vessel, while Jonah, like a stupid fellow, was fast asleep in the hold.

"After the lot had designated Jonah to be the offender, they questioned him to know who and what he was? and he told them *he was an Hebrew*; and the story implies, that he confessed himself to be guilty. But these Gentiles, instead of sacrificing him at once, without pity or mercy, as a company of Bible prophets or priests would have done by a Gentile in the same case, and as it is related

Samuel had done by Agag, and Moses by the women and children ; they endeavoured to save him, though at the risk of their own lives ; for the account says, ‘ *Nevertheless (that is, though Jonah was a Jew, and a foreigner, and the cause of all their misfortunes, and the loss of their cargo,) the men rowed hard to bring the boat to land, but they could not, for the sea wrought, and was tempestuous against them.*’ Still, however, they were unwilling to put the fate of the lot into execution ; and they cried (says the account) unto the Lord, saying, ‘ *We beseech thee, O Lord, let us not perish for this man’s life, and lay not upon us innocent blood ; for thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased thee.*’ Meaning thereby, that they did not presume to judge Jonah guilty, since that he might be innocent ; but that they considered the lot that had fallen upon him as a decree of God, or as it *pleased God*. The address of this prayer shews that the Gentiles worshipped one *Supreme Being*, and that they were not idolators, as the Jews represented them to be. But the storm still continuing, and the danger increasing, they put the fate of the lot into execution, and cast Jonah into the sea ; where, according to the story, a great fish swallowed him up whole and alive !

“ We have now to consider Jonah securely housed from the storm in the fish’s belly. Here we are told that he prayed ; but the prayer is a made-up prayer, taken from various parts of the Psalms, without connection or consistency, and adapted to the distress, but not at all to the condition that Jonah was in. It is such a prayer as a Gentile, who might know something of the Psalms, could copy out for him. This circumstance alone, were there no other, is sufficient to indicate that the whole is a made-up story. The prayer, however, is supposed to have answered the purpose, and the story goes on (taking off at the same time the cant language of a Bible-prophet,) saying, ‘ *The Lord spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon dry land.*’

“ Jonah then received a second mission to Nineveh, with which he sets out ; and we have now to consider him as a preacher. The distress he is represented to have suffered, and remembrance of his own disobedience as the cause of it, and the miraculous escape he is supposed to have had, were sufficient, one would conceive, to have impressed him with sympathy and benevolence in the execution of his mission ; but, instead of this, he enters the city with denunciation and malediction in his mouth, crying, ‘ *Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.*’

“ We have now to consider this supposed missionary in the last act of his mission ; and here it is that the malevolent spirit of a Bible-prophet, or of a predicting priest, appears in all that blackness of character, that men ascribe to the being they call the devil.

“ Having published his predictions, he withdrew, says the story, to the east side of the city. But for what ? not to contemplate, in retirement, the mercy of his Creator to himself, or to others, but to wait, with malignant impatience, the destruction of Nineveh. It came to pass, however, as the story relates, that the Ninevites re-

formed, and that God, according to the Bible phrase, repented him of the evil he had said he would do unto them, and did it not. This, saith the first verse of the last chapter, *displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry*. His obdurate heart would rather that all Nineveh should be destroyed, and every soul, young and old, perish in its ruins, than that his prediction should not be fulfilled. To expose the character of a prophet still more, a gourd is made to grow up in the night, that promiseth him an agreeable shelter from the heat of the sun, in the place to which he is retired; and the next morning it dies.

“Here the rage of the prophet becomes excessive, and he is ready to destroy himself. ‘*It is better, said he, for me to die than to live.*’ This brings on a supposed expostulation between the Almighty and the prophet; in which the former says, ‘*Dost thou well to be angry for the gourd? And Jonah said, I do well to be angry even unto death. Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it to grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than threescore thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left?*’

“Here is both the winding up of the satire, and the moral of the fable. As a satire it strikes against the character of all the Bible-prophets, and against all the indiscriminate judgments upon men, women, and children, with which this lying book, the Bible, is crowded; such as Noah’s flood, the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah, the extirpation of the Canaanites, even to sucking infants, and women with child, because the same reflection, *that there are more than threescore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left*, meaning young children, applies to all their cases. It satirizes also the supposed partiality of the Creator for one nation more than for another.

“As a moral, it preaches against the malevolent spirit of prediction; for as certainly as a man predicts ill, he becomes inclined to wish it. The pride of having his judgment right, hardens his heart, till at last he beholds with satisfaction, or sees with disappointment, the accomplishment or the failure of his predictions. This book ends with the same kind of strong and well-directed point against prophets, prophecies, and indiscriminate judgments, as the chapter that Benjamin Franklin made for the Bible, about Abraham and the stranger, ends against the intolerant spirit of religious persecutions. Thus much for the book of Jonah.

“Of the poetical parts of the Bible, that are called prophecies, I have spoken in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, and already in this; where I have said that the word *prophet* is the Bible word for *poet*; and that the flights and metaphors of those poets, many of which are become obscure by the lapse of time and the change of circumstances, have been ridiculously erected into things called prophecies, and applied to purposes the writers never thought of.

When a priest quotes any of those passages, he unriddles it agreeably to his own views, and imposes that explanation upon his congregation as the meaning of the writer. The *whore of Babylon* has been the common whore of all the priests, and each accused the other of keeping the strumpet; so well do they agree in their explanations.

“There now remain only a few books, which they call the books of the lesser prophets; and as I have already shewn that the greater are impostors, it would be cowardice to disturb the repose of the little ones. Let them sleep, then, in the arms of their nurses, the priests, and both be forgotten together.

“I have now gone through the Bible, as a man would go through a wood with an axe on his shoulder, and fell trees. Here they lie; and the priests, if they can, may replant them. They may, perhaps, stick them in the ground, but they will never make them grow.—I pass on to the books of the New Testament.

“THE NEW TESTAMENT.”

“The New Testament, they tell us, is founded upon the prophecies of the Old; if so, it must follow the fate of its foundation.

“As it is nothing extraordinary that a woman should be with child before she was married, and that the son she might bring forth should be executed, even unjustly; I see no reason for not believing, that such a woman as Mary, and such a man as Joseph, and Jesus, existed: their mere existence is a matter of indifference, about which there is no ground, either to believe, or to disbelieve, and which comes under the common head of, *It may be so; and what then?* The probability, however, is, that there were such persons, or at least such as resembled them in part of the circumstances, because almost all romantic stories have been suggested by some actual circumstance; as the adventures of Robinson Crusoe, not a word of which is true, were suggested by the case of Alexander Selkirk.

“It is not then the existence, or non-existence, of the persons that I trouble myself about; it is the fable of Jesus Christ, as told in the New Testament, and the wild and visionary doctrine raised thereon, against which I contend. The story, taking it as it is told, is blasphemously obscene. It gives an account of a young woman engaged to be married, and while under this engagement, she is, to speak plain language, debauched by a ghost, under the impious pretence, (Luke, chap. i. ver. 35,) that ‘*the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.*’

Gentlemen, great stress has been laid on these passages by Mr. Attorney General, but when you find the Unitarians, who have established their own Bible, disbelieving the im-

maculate conception, and consequently the divinity of Jesus; when you find, as I shall be able to shew you, that in many parts of their Bible, they disagree with that used by the established Church, I would ask you how you can censure Mr. Paine for the expression of his opinions? I would ask the Attorney-General also how he could prosecute me or Mr. Paine, for holding such opinions, as he himself has always been under the repute of believing? The Unitarians, who disbelieve the Trinity, who deny therefore the divinity of Jesus, are protected by the Act of Parliament which I have read to you; and it is not a little strange to see, why Mr. Paine, or myself, should be held guilty, or considered to be doing wrong, merely for doing that which others are allowed by law to do.

Notwithstanding which, Joseph afterwards married her, cohabits with her as his wife, and in his turn rivals the ghost. This is putting the story into intelligible language and when told in this manner, there is not a priest but must be ashamed to own it.

“Obscenity in matters of faith, however wrapped up, is always a token of fable and imposture; for it is necessary to our serious belief in God, that we do not connect it with stories that run, as this does, into ludicrous interpretations. This story is, upon the face of it, the same kind of story as that of Jupiter and Leda, or Jupiter and Europa, or any of the amorous adventures of Jupiter; and shews, as is already stated in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, that the Christian faith is built upon the heathen mythology.

“As the historical parts of the New Testament, so far as concerns Jesus Christ, are confined to very short space of time, less than two years, and all within the same country, and nearly to the same spot, the discordance of time, place, and circumstance, which detects the fallacy of the books of the Old Testament, and proves them to be impositions, cannot be expected to be found here in the same abundance. The New Testament, compared with the Old, is like a farce of one act, in which there is not room for very numerous violations of the unities. There are, however, some glaring contradictions, which, exclusive of the fallacy of the pretended prophecies, are sufficient to shew the story of Jesus Christ to be false.

“I lay it down as a position which cannot be controverted, first, that the *agreement* of all the parts of a story does not prove that story to be true, because the parts may agree, and the whole may be false; secondly, that the *disagreement* of the parts of a story proves *the whole cannot be true*. The agreement does not prove truth, but the disagreement proves falsehood positively.

“The history of Jesus Christ is contained in the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The first chapter of Matthew begins with giving a genealogy of Jesus Christ; and in the third chapter of Luke, there is also given a genealogy of Jesus Christ.

Did these two agree, it would not prove the genealogy to be true, because it might, nevertheless, be a fabrication; but as they contradict each other in every particular, it proves falsehood absolutely. If Matthew speaks truth, Luke speaks falsehood! and if Luke speaks truth, Matthew speaks falsehood; and as there is no authority for believing one more than the other, there is no authority for believing either; and if they cannot be believed even in the very first thing they say, and set out to prove, they are not entitled to be believed in any thing they say afterwards. Truth is an uniform thing; and as to inspiration and revelation, were we to admit, it is impossible to suppose it can be contradictory. Either then the men called apostles were impostors, or the books ascribed to them have been written by other persons, and fathered upon them, as is the case in the Old Testament.

“The book of Matthew gives, chap. i. ver. 6, a genealogy by name from David, up through Joseph, the husband of Mary, to Christ; and makes there to be *twenty-eight* generations. The book of Luke gives also a genealogy by name from Christ, through Joseph, the husband of Mary, down to David, and makes there to be *forty-three* generations; besides which, there are only the two names of David and Joseph that are alike in the two lists. I here insert both genealogical lists, and for the sake of perspicuity and comparison have placed them both in the same direction, that is, from Joseph down to David.”

Gentlemen, I need not read to you the two genealogies, you no doubt are well acquainted with them in the New Testament.

“Now, if these men, Matthew and Luke, set out with a falsehood between them (as these two accounts shew they do) in the very commencement of their history of Jesus Christ, and of who, and of what he was, what authority (as I have before asked) is there left for believing the strange things they tell us afterwards? If they cannot be believed in their account of his natural genealogy, how are we to believe them, when they tell us, he was the Son of God, the begotten by a ghost; and that an angel announced this in secret to his mother? If they lied in one genealogy, why are we to believe them in the other? If his natural genealogy be manufactured, which it certainly is, why are not we not to suppose, that his celestial genealogy is manufactured also; and that the whole is fabulous? Can any man of serious reflection hazard his future happiness upon the belief of a story naturally impossible; repugnant to every idea of decency; and related by persons already detected of falsehood? Is it not more safe, that we stop ourselves at the plain, pure, and unmixed belief of one God, which is Deism, than that we commit ourselves on an ocean of improbable, irrational, indecent, and contradictory tales?”

“The first question, however, upon the books of the New Testament, as upon those of the Old, is, Are they genuine? Were they

written by the persons to whom they are ascribed? for it is upon this ground only, that the strange things related therein have been credited. Upon this point, there is no *direct proof for or against*; and all that this state of a case proves, is *doubtfulness*; and doubtfulness is the opposite of belief. The state, therefore, that the books are in, proves against themselves, as far as this kind of proof can go.

“ But, exclusive of this, the presumption is, that the books called the Evangelists, and ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; and that they are impositions. The disordered state of the history in these four books, the silence of one book upon matters related in the other, and the disagreement that is to be found among them, implies, that they are the production of some unconnected individuals, many years after the things they pretend to relate, each of whom made his own legend; and not the writings of men living intimately together, as the men called apostles are supposed to have done: in fine, that they have been manufactured, as the books of the Old Testament have been, by other persons than those whose names they bear.

“ The story of the angel announcing, what the church calls the *immaculate conception*, is not so much as mentioned in the books ascribed to Mark and John; and is differently related in Matthew and Luke. The former says, the angel appeared to Joseph; the latter says, it was to Mary; but either, Joseph or Mary, was the worst evidence that could have been thought of; for it was others that should have testified *for them*, and not they for themselves. Were any girl that is now with child to say, and even to swear it, that she was gotten with child by a ghost, and that an angel told her so, would she be believed? Certainly she would not. Why then are we to believe the same thing of another girl whom we never saw, told by nobody knows who, nor when, nor where? How strange and inconsistent is it, that the same circumstance that would weaken the belief even of a probable story, should be given as a motive for believing this one, that has upon the face of it every token of absolute impossibility and imposture.

“ The story of Herod destroying all the children under two years old, belongs altogether to the book of Matthew; not one of the rest mentions any thing about it. Had such a circumstance been true, the universality of it must have made it known to all the writers; and the thing would have been too striking to have been omitted by any. This writer tells us, that Jesus escaped this slaughter, because Joseph and Mary were warned by an angel to flee with him into Egypt; but he forgot to make any provision for John, who was then under two years of age. John, however, who staid behind, fared as well as Jesus who fled; and therefore the story circumstantially belies itself.

“ Not any two of these writers agree in reciting, *exactly in the same words*, the written inscription, short as it is, which they tell us was put over Christ when he was crucified: and besides this, Mark says, He was crucified at the third hour (nine in the morning); and John says, it was the sixth hour (twelve at noon.)

“ The inscription is thus stated in those books :—

Matthew.. This is Jesus the king of the Jews.

Mark.....The king of the Jews.

Luke.....This is the king of the Jews.

John.....Jesus of Nazareth king of the Jews.

“ We may infer from these circumstances, trivial as they are, that those writers, whoever they were, and in whatever time they lived, were not present at the scene. The only one of the men, called apostles, who appears to have been near the spot, was Peter; and when he was accused of being one of Jesus's followers, it is said (Matthew, chap. xxvi. v. 74), ‘ *Then Peter began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man:*’ yet we are now called upon to believe the same Peter, convicted, by their own account, of perjury. For what reason, or on what authority, shall we do this?

“ The accounts that are given of the circumstances, that they tell us attended the crucifixion, are differently related in those four books.

“ The book ascribed to Matthew says, ‘ *There was darkness over all the land from the sixth hour unto the ninth hour—that the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom—that there was an earthquake—that the rocks rent—that the graves opened, that the bodies of many of the saints that slept arose and came out of their graves after the resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.*’ Such is the account which this dashing writer of the book of Matthew gives; but in which he is not supported by the writers of the other books.

“ The writer of the book ascribed to Mark, in detailing the circumstances of the crucifixion, makes no mention of any earthquake, nor of the rocks rending, nor of the graves opening, nor of the dead men walking out. The writer of the book of Luke is silent upon the same points. And as to the writer of the book of John, though he details all the circumstances of the crucifixion down to the burial of Christ, he says nothing about either the darkness—the veil of the temple—the earthquake—the rocks—the graves—nor the dead men.

“ Now if it had been true, that those things had happened; and if the writers of these books had lived at the time they did happen, and had been the persons they are said to be, namely, the four men called apostles, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, it was not possible for them, as true historians, even without the aid of inspiration, not to have recorded them. The things, supposing them to have been facts, were of too much notoriety not to have been known, and of too much importance not to have been told. All these supposed apostles must have been witnesses of the earthquake, if there had been any; for it was not possible for them to have been absent from it; the opening of the graves and the resurrection of the dead men, and their walking about the city, is of greater importance than the earthquake. An earthquake is always possible, and natural, and proves nothing; but this opening of the graves is supernatural, and directly in point to their doctrine, their cause, and their apostleship. Had

it been true, it would have filled up whole chapters of those books, and been the chosen theme and general chorus of all the writers; but instead of this, little and trivial things, and mere prattling conversations of, *he said this*, and *she said that*, are often tediously detailed, while this most important of all, had it been true, is passed off in a slovenly manner by a single dash of the pen, and that by one writer only, and not so much as hinted at by the rest.

"It is an easy thing to tell a lie, but it is difficult to support the lie after it is told. The writer of the book of Matthew should have told us who the saints were that came to life again, and went into the city, and what became of them afterwards, and who it was that saw them; for he is not hardy enough to say he saw them himself; whether they came out naked, and all in natural buff, he-saints and she-saints; or whether they came full dressed, and where they got their dresses; whether they went to their former habitations, and reclaimed their wives, their husbands, and their property, and how they were received; whether they entered ejectments for the recovery of their possessions, or brought actions of *crim. con.* against the rival interlopers; whether they remained on earth, and followed their former occupation of preaching or working; or whether they died again, or went back to their graves alive, and buried themselves.

"Strange indeed, that an army of saints should return to life, and nobody know who they were, nor who it was that saw them, and that not a word more should be said upon the subject, nor these saints have any thing to tell us! Had it been the prophets who (as we are told) had formerly prophesied of these things, *they* must have had a *great deal* to say. They could have told us every thing, and we should have had posthumous prophecies, with notes and commentaries upon the first, a little better at least than we have now. Had it been Moses, and Aaron, and Joshua, and Samuel, and David, not an unconverted Jew had remained in all Jerusalem. Had it been John the Baptist, and the saints of the time then present, every body would have known them, and they would have out-preached and out-famed all the other apostles. But instead of this, these saints are made to pop up, like Jonah's gourd in the night, for no purpose at all but to wither in the morning. Thus much for this part of the story.

"The tale of the resurrection follows that of the crucifixion; and in this as well as in that, the writers, whoever they were, disagree so much, as to make it evident that none of them were there.

"The book of Matthew states, that when Christ was put in the sepulchre, the Jews applied to Pilate for a watch or a guard to be placed over the sepulchre, to prevent the body being stolen by the disciples; and that in consequence of this request, the sepulchre *was made sure, sealing the stone* that covered the mouth, and setting a watch. But the other books say nothing about this application, nor about the sealing, nor the guard, nor the watch; and according to their accounts, there were none. Matthew, however, follows up this part of the story of the guard or the watch with a second part, that I shall notice in the conclusion, as it serves to detect the fallacy of those books.

“The book of Matthew continues its account, and says, (chap. xxviii. ver. 1,) that at the end of the sabbath, as it began to *dawn*, towards the first day of the week, came *Mary Magdalene* and the *other Mary*, to see the sepulchre. Mark says it was sun-rising, and John says it was dark. Luke says it was *Mary Magdalene*, and *Joanna*, and *Mary the mother* of James, and *other women*, that came to the sepulchre; and John states, that *Mary Magdalene* came alone. So well do they agree about their first evidence! they all, however, appear to have known most about *Mary Magdalene*; she was a woman of a large acquaintance, and it was not an ill conjecture that she might be upon the stroll.

“The book of Matthew goes on to say, (ver. 2.) ‘And behold there was a great earthquake, for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, *and sat upon it*.’ But the other books say nothing about any earthquake, nor about the angel rolling back the stone, *and sitting upon it*; and according to their account, there was no angel *sitting there*. Mark says the angel *was within the sepulchre, sitting* on the right side. Luke says there were two, and they were both standing up; and John says, they were both sitting down, one at the head and the other at the feet.

“Matthew says, that the angel that was sitting upon the stone on the outside of the sepulchre, told the two Marys that Christ was risen, and that the women went *away* quickly. Mark says, that the women, upon seeing the stone rolled away, and wondering at it, went *into* the sepulchre, and that it was the angel that was *sitting* within on the right side, that told them so. Luke says, it was the two angels that were standing up; and John says, it was Jesus Christ himself that told it to *Mary Magdalene*; and that she did not go into the sepulchre, but only stooped down and looked in.

“Now, if the writers of these four books had gone into a court of justice to prove an *alibi* (for it is of the nature of an *alibi* that is here attempted to be proved, namely, the absence of a dead body by supernatural means,) and had they given their evidence in the same contradictory manner as it is here given, they would have been in danger of having their ears cropt for perjury, and would have justly deserved it. Yet this is the evidence, and these are the books, that have been imposed upon the world, as being given by divine inspiration, and as the unchangeable word of God.

“The writer of the book of Matthew, after giving this account, relates a story that is not to be found in any of the other books, and which is the same I have just before alluded to.

“‘Now, says he, (that is, after the conversation the women had had with the angel sitting upon the stone,) behold some of the watch (meaning the watch that he had said had been placed over the sepulchre) came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done; and when they were assembled with the elders and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, that his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we *slept*; and if this come to the governor’s ear,

we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught; and this saying (that his disciples stole him away) is commonly reported among the Jews *until this day.*'

"The expression, *until this day*, is an evidence that the book ascribed to Matthew was not written by Matthew, and that it has been manufactured long after the times and things of which it pretends to treat; for the expression implies a great length of intervening time. It would be inconsistent in us to speak in this manner of any thing happening in our own time. To give, therefore, intelligible meaning to the expression, we must suppose a lapse of some generations at least, for this manner of speaking carries the mind back to ancient time.

"The absurdity also of the story is worth noticing; for it shews the writer of the book of Matthew to have been an exceedingly weak and foolish man. He tells a story, that contradicts itself in point of possibility; for though the guard, if there were any, might be made to say that the body was taken away while they were *asleep*, and to give that as a reason for their not having presented it, that same sleep must also have prevented their knowing how, and by whom it was done; and yet they are made to say, that it was the disciples who did it. Were a man to tender his evidence of something that he should say was done, and of the manner of doing it, and of the person who did it while he was asleep, and could know nothing of the matter, such evidence could not be received: it will do well enough for Testament evidence, but not for any thing where truth is concerned.

"I come now to that part of the evidence in those books, that respects the pretended appearance of Christ after this pretended resurrection.

"The writer of the book of Matthew relates, that the angel that was sitting on the stone at the mouth of the sepulchre, said to the two Marys, chap. xxviii. ver. 7, '*Behold Christ is gone before you into Galilee, there ye shall see him; lo, I have told you.*' And the same writer, at the two next verses (8, 9,) makes Christ himself to speak to the same purpose to these women, immediately after the angel had told it to them, and that they ran quickly to tell it to the disciples; and at the 16th verse it is said, '*then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them; and, when they saw him, they worshipped him.*'

"But the writer of the book of John tells us a story very different to this; for he says, chap. xx. ver. 19, '*Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week* (that is, the same day that Christ is said to have risen,) *when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst of them.*'

"According to Matthew the eleven were marching to Galilee, to meet Jesus in a mountain, by his own appointment, at the very time when, according to John, they were assembled in another place, and that not by appointment but in secret, for fear of the Jews.

"The writer of the book of Luke contradicts that of Matthew more pointedly than John does; for he says expressly, that the meeting was in *Jerusalem* the evening of the same day that he (Christ) rose, and that the *eleven* were *there*. See Luke, chap. xxiv. ver. 13. 33.

"Now, it is not possible, unless we admit these supposed disciples the right of wilful lying, that the writer of these books could be any of the eleven persons called disciples; for if, according to Matthew, the eleven went into Galilee to meet Jesus in a mountain by his own appointment, on the same day that he is said to have risen, Luke and John must have been two of that eleven; yet the writer of Luke says expressly, and John implies as much, that the meeting was, that same day, in a house in Jerusalem; and, on the other hand, if, according to Luke and John, the *eleven* were assembled in a house in Jerusalem, Matthew must have been one of that eleven; yet Matthew says, the meeting was in a mountain in Galilee, and consequently the evidence given in those books destroys each other.

"The writer of the book of Mark says nothing about any meeting in Galilee; but he says, chap. xvi. ver. 12, that Christ, after his resurrection, appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked into the country, and that these two told it to the residue, who would not believe them. Luke also tells a story, in which he keeps Christ employed the whole of the day of this pretended resurrection, until the evening, and which totally invalidates the account of going to the mountain in Galilee. He says, that two of them, without saying which two, went that same day to a village called Emmaus, threescore furlongs (seven miles and a half) from Jerusalem, and that Christ, in disguise, went with them, and staid with them unto the evening, and supped with them, and then vanished out of their sight, and re-appeared that same evening, at the meeting of the eleven in Jerusalem.

"This is the contradictory manner in which the evidence of this pretended re-appearance of Christ is stated; the only point in which the writers agree, is the skulking privacy of that re-appearance; for whether it was in the recess of a mountain in Galilee, or in a shut-up house in Jerusalem, it was still skulking. To what cause then are we to assign this skulking? On the one hand, it is directly repugnant to the supposed or pretended end—that of convincing the world that Christ was risen; and, on the other hand, to have asserted the publicity of it, would have exposed the writers of those books to public detection, and therefore they have been under the necessity of making it a private affair.

"As to the account of Christ being seen by more than five hundred at once, it is Paul only who says it, and not the five hundred who say it for themselves. It is, therefore, the testimony of but one man, and that too of a man, who did not, according to the same account, believe a word of the matter himself, at the time it is said to have happened. His evidence, supposing him to have been the

writer of the 13th chapter of Corinthians, where this account is given, is like that of a man, who comes into a court of justice to swear, that what he had sworn before is false. A man may often see reason, and he has too always the right of changing his opinion ; but this liberty does not extend to matters of fact.

“ I now come to the last scene, that of the ascension into heaven. Here all fear of the Jews, and of every thing else, must necessarily have been out of the question : it was that which, if true, was to seal the whole ; and upon which the reality of the future mission of the disciples was to rest for proof. Words, whether declarations or promises, that passed in private, either in the recess of a mountain in Galilee, or in a shut-up house in Jerusalem, even supposing them to have been spoken, could not be evidence in public ; it was therefore necessary that this last scene should preclude the possibility of denial and dispute ; and that it should be, as I have stated in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, as public and as visible as the sun at noon day : at least, it ought to have been as public as the crucifixion is reported to have been. But to come to the point.

“ In the first place the writer of the book of Matthew does not say a syllable about it ; neither does the writer of the book of John. This being the case, is it possible to suppose that those writers, who affect to be even minute in other matters, would have been silent upon this, had it been true ? The writer of the book of Mark passes it off in a careless, slovenly manner, with a single dash of the pen, as if he was tired of romancing, or ashamed of the story. So also does the writer of Luke. And even between these two, there is not an apparent agreement, as to the place where this final parting is said to have been.

“ The book of Mark says, that Christ appeared to the eleven as they sat at meat ; alluding to the meeting of the eleven at Jerusalem : he then states the conversation that he says passed at that meeting ; and immediately after says (as a school-boy would finish a dull story) ‘ *So then, after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.*’ But the writer of Luke says, that the ascension was from Bethany : that he (Christ) *led them out as far as Bethany, and was parted from them then there, and was carried up into heaven.*’ So also Mahomet : and as to Moses, the apostle Jude says, ver. 9, *That Michael and the devil disputed about his body.* While we believe such fables as these, or either of them, we believe unworthily of the Almighty.

“ I have now gone through the examination of the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ; and when it is considered that the whole space of time, from the crucifixion to what is called the ascension, is but a few days, apparently not more than three or four, and that all the circumstances are reported to have happened nearly about the same spot, Jerusalem ; it is, I believe, impossible to find, in any story upon record, so many and such glaring absurdities, contradictions, and falsehoods, as are in those books.

They are more numerous and striking than I had any expectation of finding, when I began this examination, and far more so than I had any idea of, when I wrote the former part of the *Age of Reason*.—

Gentlemen, why was the latter part of this paragraph omitted? Why did Mr. Attorney-General say, that Mr. Paine had views far different on the subject from those he has expressed? No, Gentlemen, Mr. Paine sincerely believed what he wrote, for he was at that moment threatened with the guillotine. And I ask of the Attorney-General how he could bring forward, much less support, the assertions he has made with respect to the death of that Friend to Reason and the Human Race?

—I had then neither Bible nor Testament to refer to, nor could I procure any. My own situation, even as to existence, was becoming every day more precarious; and as I was willing to leave something behind me upon the subject, I was obliged to be quick and concise. The quotations I then made were from memory only, but they are correct; and the opinions I have advanced in that work are the effect of the most clear and long-established conviction—that the Bible and Testament are impositions upon the world—that the fall of man—the account of Jesus Christ being the Son of God, and of his dying to appease the wrath of God, and of salvation by that strange means, are all fabulous inventions, dishonourable to the wisdom and power of the Almighty—that the only true religion is Deism, by which I then meant, and now mean, the belief of one God, and an imitation of his moral character; or the practice of what are called moral virtues—and that it was upon this only (so far as religion is concerned) that I rested all my hopes of happiness hereafter. So say I now—and so help me God.

“ But to return to the subject.—Though it is impossible, at this distance of time, to ascertain as a fact who were the writers of those four books (and this alone is sufficient to hold them in doubt, and where we doubt we do not believe) it is not difficult to ascertain negatively that they were not written by the persons to whom they are ascribed. The contradictions in those books demonstrate two things:

“ First, that the writers cannot have been eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses of the matters they relate, or they would have related them without those contradictions; and consequently that the books have not been written by the persons called apostles, who are supposed to have been witnesses of this kind.

“ Secondly, that the writers, whoever they were, have not acted in concerted imposition, but each writer, separately and individually for himself, and without the knowledge of the other.

“ The same evidence that applies to prove the one, applies equally to prove both cases; that is, that the books were not written by the men called apostles, and also that they are not a concerted imposi-

tion. As to inspiration, it is altogether out of the question; we may as well attempt to unite truth and falsehood, as inspiration and contradiction.

“ If four men are eye-witnesses and ear-witnesses to a scene, they will, without any concert between them, agree as to the time and place when and where that scene happened. Their individual knowledge of the *thing*, each one knowing it for himself, renders concert totally unnecessary; the one will not say it was in a mountain in the country, and the other at a house in town: the one will not say it was at sun-rise, and the other that it was dark. For in whatever place it was, at whatever time it was, they know it equally alike.

“ And, on the other hand, if four men concert a story, they will make their separate relations of that story agree, and corroborate with each other to support the whole. *That* concert supplies the want of fact in the one case, as the knowledge of the fact supersedes, in the other case, the necessity of a concert. The same contradictions, therefore, that prove there has been no concert, prove also that the reporters had no knowledge of the fact (or rather of that which they relate as a fact,) and detect also the falsehood of their reports. Those books, therefore, have neither been written by the men called apostles, nor by impostors in concert. How then have they been written?

“ I am not one of those who are fond of believing there is much of that which is called wilful lying, or lying originally; except in the case of men setting up to be prophets, as in the Old Testament: for prophesying is lying professionally. In almost all other cases, it is not difficult to discover the progress, by which even simple supposition, with the aid of credulity, will, in time, grow into a lie, and at last be told as a fact; and whenever we can find a charitable reason for a thing of this kind, we ought not to indulge a severe one.

“ The story of Jesus-Christ appearing after he was dead, is the story of an apparition, such as timid imaginations can always create in vision, and credulity believe. Stories of this kind had been told of the assassination of Julius Cæsar, not many years before, and they generally have their origin in violent deaths, or in the execution of innocent persons. In cases of this kind, compassion lends its aid, and benevolently stretches the story. It goes on a little and a little farther, till it becomes a *most certain truth*. Once start a ghost, and credulity fills up the history of its life, and assigns the cause of its appearance! one tells it one way, another another way, till there are as many stories about the ghost and about the proprietor of the ghost, as there are about Jesus Christ in these four books.

“ The story of the appearance of Jesus Christ is told with that strange mixture of the natural and impossible, that distinguishes legendary tale from fact. He is represented as suddenly coming in and going out when the doors are shut, and of vanishing out of sight, and appearing again, as one would conceive of an unsubstantial vision; then again he is hungry, sits down to meat, and eats

his supper. But as those who tell stories of this kind, never provide for all the cases, so it is here : they have told us, that when he arose he left his grave clothes behind him ; but they have forgotten to provide other clothes for him to appear in afterwards, or to tell us what he did with them when he ascended ; whether he stripped all off, or went up clothes and all. In the case of Elijah, they have been careful enough to make him throw down his mantle ; how it happened not to be burnt in the chariot of fire, they also have not told us. But as imagination supplies all deficiencies of this kind, we may suppose, if we please, that it was made of salamander's wool.

“ Those who are not much acquainted with ecclesiastical history, may suppose that the book called the New Testament has existed ever since the time of Jesus Christ, as they suppose that the books ascribed to Moses have existed ever since the time of Moses. But the fact is historically otherwise ; there was no such book as the New Testament till more than three hundred years after the time that Christ is said to have lived.

“ At what time the books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, began to appear, is altogether a matter of uncertainty. There is not the least shadow of evidence of who the persons were that wrote them, nor at what time they were written ; and they might as well have been called by the names of any of the other supposed apostles, as by the names they are now called. The originals are not in the possession of any Christian church existing, any more than the two tables of stone written on, they pretend, by the finger of God, upon mount Sinai, and given to Moses, are in the possession of the Jews. And even if they were, there is no possibility of proving the hand writing in either case. At the time those books were written there was no printing, and consequently there could be no publication, otherwise than by written copies, which any man might make or alter at pleasure, and call them originals. Can we suppose it is consistent with the wisdom of the Almighty, to commit himself and his will to man, upon such precarious means as these, or that it is consistent we should pin our faith upon such uncertainties ? We cannot make nor alter, nor even imitate, so much as one blade of grass that he has made, and yet we can make or alter *words of God* as easily as words of man.*

* “ The former part of the *Age of Reason* has not been published two years, and there is already an expression in it that is not mine. The expression is, *The book of Luke was carried by a majority of one voice only*. It may be true, but it is not I that have said it. Some person, who might know of the circumstance, has added it in a note at the bottom of the page of some of the editions, printed either in England or in America ; and the printers, after that, have erected it into a body of the work, and made me the author of it. If this has happened within such a short space of time, notwithstanding the aid of printing, which prevents the alteration of copies individually ; what may not have happened in a much greater length of time, when there was no printing, and when any man who could write could make a written copy, and call it an original, by Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John ? ”

"About three hundred and fifty years after the time that Christ is said to have lived, several writings of the kind I am speaking of, were scattered in the hands of divers individuals; and as the church had begun to form itself into an hierarchy, or church government, with temporal powers, it set itself about collecting them into a code, as we now see them called *The New Testament*. They decided by vote, as I have before said in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, which of those writings, out of the collection they had made, should be the *word of God*, and which should not. The Rabbins of the Jews had decided, by vote, upon the books of the Bible before.

"As the object of the church, as is the case in all national establishments of churches, was power and revenue, and terror the means it used; it is consistent to suppose, that the most miraculous and wonderful of the writings they had collected stood the best chance of being voted. And as to the authenticity of the books, the *vote stands in the place of it*; for it can be traced no higher.

"Disputes, however, ran high among the people then calling themselves Christians; not only as to points of doctrine, but as to the authenticity of the books. In the contest between the persons called Saint Augustine and Fauste, about the year 400, the latter says, 'The books called the Evangelists have been composed long after the times of the apostles, by some obscure men, who, fearing that the world would not give credit to their relation of matters of which they could not be informed, have published them under the names of the apostles; and which are so full of sottishness and discordant relations, that there is neither agreement nor connection between them.'

"And in another place, addressing himself to the advocates of those books, as being the word of God, he says, 'It is thus that your predecessors have inserted, in the scriptures of our Lord, many things, which, though they carry his name, agree not with his doctrines. This is not surprising, *since that we have often proved* that these things have not been written by himself, nor by his apostles, but that for the greatest part they are founded upon *tales*, upon *vague reports*, and put together by I know not what, half-Jews, with but little agreement between them; and which they have nevertheless published under the names of the apostles of our Lord, and they have thus attributed to them their own *errors and their lies*.'*

"The reader will see by these extracts, that the authenticity of the books of the New Testament was denied, and the books treated as tales, forgeries, and lies, at the time they were voted to be the word of God. But the interest of the church, with the assistance of the faggot, bore down the opposition, and at last suppressed all inves-

* "I have taken these two extracts from Boulanger's *Life of Paul*, written in French; Boulanger has quoted them from the writings of Augustine against Fauste, to which he refers."

tigation. Miracles followed upon miracles, if we will believe them; and men were taught to say they believed whether they believed or not. But (by way of throwing in a thought) the French Revolution has excommunicated the church from the power of working miracles: she has not been able, with the assistance of all her saints, to work *one* miracle since the revolution began; and as she never stood in greater need than now, we may, without the aid of divination, conclude, that all her former miracles were tricks and lies.*

"When we consider the lapse of more than three hundred years intervening between the time that Christ is said to have lived and the time the New Testament was formed into a book, we must see, even without the assistance of historical evidence, the exceeding uncertainty there is of its authenticity. The authenticity of the book of Homer, so far as regards the authorship, is much better established than that of the New Testament, though Homer is a thousand years the most ancient. It was only an exceeding good poet that could have written the book of Homer, and therefore few men only could have attempted it; and a man capable of doing it would not have thrown away his own fame by giving it to another. In like manner, there were but few that could have composed Euclid's Elements, because none but an exceeding good geometrician could have been the author of that work.

"But with respect to the books of the New Testament, particularly such parts as tell us of the resurrection and ascension of Christ, any person who could tell a story of an apparition, or of a *man's walking*, could have made such books; for the story is most wretchedly told. The chance, therefore, of forgery in the Testament, is millions to one greater than in the case of Homer or Eu-

* Boulanger, in his *Life of Paul*, has collected from the ecclesiastical histories, and the writings of the fathers, as they are called, several matters which shew the opinions that prevailed among the different sects of Christians, at the time the Testament, as we now see it, was voted to be the word of God. The following extracts are from the second chapter of that work.

"The Marcionists (a Christian sect), assured that the evangelists were filled with falsities. The Manicheens, who formed a very numerous sect at the commencement of Christianity, *rejected as false, all the New Testament*; and showed other writings quite different that they gave for authentic. The Corinthians, like the Marcionists, admitted not the Acts of the Apostles. The Encratites, and the Sevenians, adopted neither the Acts nor the Epistles of Paul. Chrysostome, in a homily which he made upon the Acts of the Apostles, says, that in his time, about the year 400, many people knew nothing either of the author or of the book. St. Irene, who lived before that time, reports that the Valentinians, like several other sects of the Christians, accused the Scriptures of being filled with imperfections, errors, and contradictions. The Ebionites or Nazarenes, who were the first Christians, rejected all the Epistles of Paul, and regarded him as an impostor. They report, among other things, that he was originally a Pagan, that he came to Jerusalem, where he lived some time; and that having a mind to marry the daughter of the high priest, he caused himself to be circumcised; but that not being able to obtain her, he quarrelled with the Jews, and wrote against circumcision, and against the observation of the sabbath, and against all the legal ordinances."

clid. Of the numerous priests or parsons of the present day, bishops and all, every one of them can make a sermon, or translate a scrap of Latin, especially if it has been translated a thousand times before; but is there any amongst them that can write poetry like Homer, or science like Euclid? The sum total of a parson's learning, with very few exceptions, is *a b ab*, and *hic, hæc, hoc*; and their knowledge of science is three times one is three; and this is more than sufficient to have enabled them, had they lived at the time, to have written all the books of the New Testament.

"As the opportunities of forgery were greater, so also was the inducement. A man could gain no advantage by writing under the name of Homer or Euclid; if he could write equal to them, it would be better that he wrote under his own name; if inferior, he could not succeed. Pride would prevent the former, and impossibility the latter. But with respect to such books as compose the New Testament, all the inducements were on the side of forgery. The best imagined history that could have been made, at the distance of two or three hundred years after the time, could not have passed for an original under the name of the real writer; the only chance of success lay in forgery, for the church wanted pretence for its new doctrine, and truth and talents were out of the question.

"But as it is not uncommon (as before observed) to relate stories of persons *walking* after they are dead, and of ghosts and apparitions of such as have fallen by some violent or extraordinary means; and as the people of that day were in the habit of believing such things, and of the appearance of angels, and also of devils, and of their getting into people's insides, and shaking them like a fit of an ague, and of their being cast out again as if by an emetic—(Mary Magdalene, the book of Mark tells us, had brought up, or been brought to bed of seven devils); it was nothing extraordinary that some story of this kind should get abroad of the person called Jesus Christ, and become afterwards the foundation of the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each writer told the tale as he heard it, or thereabouts, and gave to his book the name of the saint or the apostle who in tradition had given as the eye-witness. It is only upon this ground that the contradictions in those books can be accounted for; and if this be not the case, they are downright impositions, lies, and forgeries, without even the apology of credulity.

"That they have been written by a sort of half-Jews, as the foregoing quotations mention, is discernible enough. The frequent references made to that chief assassin and impostor, Moscs, and to the men called prophets, establishes this point; and, on the other hand, the church has complimented the fraud, by admitting the Bible and Testament to reply to each other. Between the Christian Jew and the Christian Gentile, the thing called a prophecy, and the thing prophesied; the type, and the thing typified; the sign, and the thing signified, have been industriously jummaged

up, and fitted together like old locks and pick-lock keys. The story foolishly enough told of Eve and the serpent, and naturally enough as to the enmity between men and serpents (for the serpent always bites about the *heel*, because it cannot reach higher; and the man always knocks the serpent about the *head*, as the most effectual way to prevent its biting); this foolish story, I say, has been made into a prophecy, a type, and a promise to begin with; and the lying imposition of Isaiah to Ahaz, *That a virgin shall conceive and bear a son*, as a sign that Ahaz should conquer, when the event was that he was defeated (as already noticed in the observations on the book of Isaiah), has been perverted, and made to serve as a winder-up.

“Jonah and the whale are also made into a sign or type. Jonah is Jesus, and the whale is the grave; for it is said, (and they have made Christ to say it of himself) Matt. chap. xvii. ver. 40, ‘For as Jonah was *three days and three nights* in the whale’s belly, so shall the Son of man be *three days and three nights* in the heart of the earth.’ But it happens awkwardly enough that Christ, according to their own account, was but one day and two nights in the grave; about 36 hours instead of 72; that is, the Friday night, the Saturday, and the Saturday night; for they say he was up on the Sunday morning by sun-rise, or before. But as this fits quite as well as the *bite* and the *kick* in Genesis, or the *virgin* and her *son* in Isaiah, it will pass in the lump of *orthodox* things. Thus much for the historical part of the Testament and its evidences.

“*Epistles of Paul*.—The epistles ascribed to Paul, being fourteen in number, almost fill up the remaining part of the Testament. Whether those epistles were written by the person to whom they were ascribed, is a matter of no great importance, since the writer whoever he was, attempts to prove his doctrine by argument. He does not pretend to have been witness to any of the scenes told of the resurrection and ascension; and he declares that he had not believed them.

“The story of his being struck to the ground as he was journeying to Damascus, has nothing in it miraculous or extraordinary; he escaped with his life, and that is more than many others have done, who have been struck with lightning; and that he should lose his sight for three days, and be unable to eat or drink during that time, is nothing more than is common in such conditions. His companions that were with him appear not to have suffered in the same manner, for they were well enough to lead him the remainder of the journey; neither did they pretend to have seen any vision.

The character of the person called Paul, according to the accounts given of him, has in it a great deal of violence and fanaticism; he had persecuted with as much heat as he preached afterwards; the stroke he had received had changed his thinking, without altering his constitution; and, either as a Jew or a Christian, he was the same zealot. Such men are never good moral

evidences of any doctrine they preach. They are always in extremes, as well as of action as of belief.

"The doctrine he sets out to prove by argument, is the resurrection of the same body; and he advances this as an evidence of immortality. But so much will men differ in their manner of thinking, and in the conclusions they draw from the same premises, that this doctrine of the resurrection of the same body, so far from being an evidence against it; for if I have already died in this body, and am raised again in the same body in which I have died, it is presumptive evidence that I shall die again. That resurrection no more secures me against the repetition of dying, than an ague fit, when past, secures me against another. To believe, therefore, in immortality, I must have a more elevated idea than is contained in the gloomy doctrine of the resurrection.

"Besides, as a matter of choice, as well as of hope, I had rather have a better body and a more convenient form than the present. Every animal in the creation excels us in something. The winged insects, without mentioning doves or eagles, can pass over more space and with greater ease, in a few minutes, than man can in an hour. The glide of the smallest fish, in proportion to its bulk, exceeds us in motion, almost beyond comparison, and without weariness. Even the sluggish snail can ascend from the bottom of a dungeon, where man, by the want of that ability, would perish; and a spider can launch itself from the top, as a playful amusement. The personal powers of man are so limited, and his heavy frame so little constructed to extensive enjoyment, that there is nothing to induce us to wish the opinion of Paul to be true. It is too little for the magnitude of the scene—too mean for the sublimity of the subject.

"But all other arguments apart, the *consciousness of existence* is the only conceivable idea we can have of another life, and the continuance of that consciousness is immortality. The consciousness of existence, or the knowing that we exist, is not necessarily confined to the same form, nor to the same matter, even in this life.

We have not in all cases the same form, nor in any case the same matter, that composed our bodies twenty or thirty years ago; and yet we are conscious of being the same persons. Even legs and arms, which make up almost half the human frame, are not necessary to the consciousness of existence. These may be lost or taken away, and the full consciousness of existence remain; and were their place supplied by wings or other appendages, we cannot conceive that it could alter our consciousness of existence. In short, we know not how much, or rather how little, of our composition it is, and how exquisitely fine that little is, that creates in us this consciousness of existence; and all beyond that is like the pulp of a peach, distinct and separate from the vegetative speck in the kernel.

"Who can say by what exceeding fine action of fine matter it is

that a thought is produced in what we call the mind? and yet that thought, when produced, as I now produce the thought I am writing, is capable of becoming immortal, and is the only production of man that has that capacity.

“Statues of brass or marble will perish; and statues made in imitation of them are not the same statues, nor the same workmanship, any more than a copy of a picture is the same picture. But print and reprint a thought a thousand times over, and that with materials of any kind—carve it in wood, or engrave it on stone, the thought is eternally and identically the same thought in every case. It has a capacity of unimpaired existence, unaffected by change of matter, and is essentially distinct, and of a nature different from every thing else that we know of or can conceive. If then the thing produced has in itself a capacity of being immortal, it is more than a token that the power that produced it, which is the self-same thing as consciousness of existence, can be immortal also; and that as independently of the matter it was first connected with, as the thought is of the printing or writing it first appeared in. The one idea is not more difficult to believe than the other, and we can see that one is true.

“That the consciousness of existence is not dependent on the same form or the same matter, is demonstrated to our senses in the works of the creation, as far as our senses are capable of receiving that demonstration. A very numerous part of the animal creation preaches to us, far better than Paul, the belief of a life hereafter. Their little life resembles an earth and a heaven—a present and a future state: and comprises, if it may be so expressed, immortality in miniature.

“The most beautiful parts of the creation, to our eye, are the winged insects, and they are not so originally. They acquire that form and that inimitable brilliancy by progressive changes. The slow and creeping caterpillar-worm of to-day, passes in a few days to a torpid figure, and a state resembling death; and in the next change comes forth, in all the miniature magnificence of life, a splendid butterfly. No resemblance of the former creature remains; every thing is changed; all his powers are new, and life is to him another thing. We cannot conceive that the consciousness of existence is not the same in this state of the animal as before; why then must I believe that the resurrection of the same body is necessary to continue to me the consciousness of existence hereafter?

“In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have called the creation the true and only real word of God; and this instance, or this text, in the book of creation, not only shews to us that this thing may be so, but that it is so; and that the belief of a future state is a rational belief, founded upon facts visible in the creation; for it is not more difficult to believe that we shall exist hereafter in a better state and form than at present, than that a worm should

become a butterfly, and quit the dunghill for the atmosphere, if we did not know it as a fact.

“As to the doubtful jargon ascribed to Paul, in the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, which makes part of the burial service of some Christian sectaries, it is as destitute of meaning as the tolling of the bell at the funeral; it explains nothing to the understanding—it illustrates nothing to the imagination, but leaves the reader to find any meaning if he can. ‘All flesh (says he) is not the same flesh. There is one flesh of men; another of beasts; another of fishes; and another of birds.’ And what then?—nothing. A cook could have said as much. ‘There are also (says he) bodies celestial and bodies terrestrial; the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another.’ And what then?—nothing. And what is the difference? nothing that he has told. ‘There is (says he) one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars.’ And what then?—nothing; except that he says that *one star differeth from another star in glory*, instead of distance; and he might as well have told us, that the moon did not shine so bright as the sun. All this is nothing better than the jargon of a conjuror, who picks up phrases he does not understand, to confound the credulous people who come to have their fortunes told. Priests and conjurors are of the same trade.

“Sometimes Paul affects to be a naturalist, and to prove his system of resurrection from the principles of vegetation. ‘Thou fool, (says he) that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.’ To which one might reply in his own language, and say, Thou fool, Paul, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die not; for the grain that dies in the ground never does nor can vegetate. It is only the living grains that produce the next crop. But the metaphor, in any point of view, is no simile. It is succession, and not resurrection.

“The progress of an animal from one state of being to another, as from a worm to a butterfly, applies to the case; but this of the grain does not, and shews Paul to have been what he says of others, a fool.

“Whether the fourteen epistles ascribed to Paul were written by him or not, is a matter of indifference; they are either argumentative or dogmatical; and as the argument is defective, and the dogmatical part is merely presumptive, it signifies not who wrote them. And the same may be said for the remaining parts of the Testament. It is not upon the epistles, but upon what is called the Gospel, contained in the four books ascribed to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and upon the pretended prophecies, that the theory of the church calling itself the Christian Church, is founded. The epistles are dependent upon those, and must follow their fate; for if the story of Jesus Christ be fabulous, all reasoning founded upon it as a supposed truth, must fall with it.

“ We know from history, that one of the principal leaders of this church, Athanasius, lived at the time the New Testament was formed; and we know also. from the absurd jargon he has left us under the name of a creed, the character of the men who formed the New Testament; and we know also from the same history, that the authenticity of the books of which it is composed was denied at that time. It is upon the vote of such as Athanasius, that the Testament was decreed to be the word of God; and nothing can present to us a more strange idea than that of decreeing the word of God by vote. Those who rest their faith upon such authority put man in the place of God, and have no true foundation for future happiness; credulity, however, is not a crime; but it becomes criminal by resisting conviction. It is strangling in the womb of the conscience the efforts it makes to ascertain truth. We should never force belief upon ourselves in any thing.

“ I here close the subject on the Old Testament and the New. The evidence I have produced to prove them forgeries, is extracted from the books themselves, and acts, like a two-edged sword, either way. If the evidence be denied, the authenticity of the Scriptures is denied with it; for it is Scripture evidence: and if the evidence be admitted, the authenticity of the books is disproved. The contradictory impossibilities contained in the Old Testament and the New, put them in the case of a man who swears for and against. Either evidence convicts him of perjury, and equally destroys reputation.

“ Should the Bible and Testament hereafter fall, it is not I that have been the occasion. I have done no more than extracted the evidence from the confused mass of matter with which it is mixed, and arranged that evidence in a point of light to be clearly seen and easily comprehended: and having done this, I leave the reader to judge for himself, as I have judged for myself.

“ CONCLUSION.

“ In the former part of the *Age of Reason*, I have spoken of the three frauds, *mystery*, *miracle*, and *prophecy*; and as I have seen nothing in any of the answers to that work, that in the least affects what I have there said upon those subjects, I shall not encumber this Second Part with additions that are not necessary.

“ I have spoken also in the same work upon what is called *revelation*, and have shewn the absurd misapplication of that term to the books of the Old Testament and the New; for certainly revelation is out of the question in reciting any thing of which man has been the actor or the witness. That which a man has done or seen, needs no revelation to tell him he has done it, or seen it; for he knows it already; nor to enable him to tell it or to write it. It is ignorance, or imposition, to apply the term revelation in such cases;

yet the Bible and Testament are classed under this fraudulent description of being all *revelation*.

"Revelation then, so far as the term has relation between God and man, can only be applied to something which God reveals of his *will* to man; but though the power of the Almighty to make such a communication is necessarily admitted, because to that power all things are possible, yet, the thing so revealed (if any thing ever was revealed, and which, by the bye, it is impossible to prove) is revelation to the person *only to whom it is made*. His account of it to another is not revelation; and whoever puts faith in that account, puts it in the man from whom the account comes; and that man may have been deceived, or may have dreamed it; or he may be an impostor, and may lie. There is no possible criterion whereby to judge of the truth of what he tells; for even the morality of it would be no proof of revelation. In all such cases, the proper answer would be, '*When it is revealed to me, I will believe it to be a revelation; but it is not, and cannot be incumbent upon me to believe it to be revelation before: neither is it proper that I should take the word of a man as the word of God, and put man in the place of God.*' This is the manner in which I have spoken of revelation in the former part of the *Age of Reason*, and which, while it reverentially admits revelation as a possible thing, because, as before said, to the Almighty all things are possible, it prevents the imposition of one man upon another, and precludes the wicked use of pretended revelation.

"But though, speaking for myself, I thus admit the possibility of revelation, I totally disbelieve that the Almighty ever did communicate any thing to man, by any mode of speech, in any language, or by any kind of vision, or appearance, or by any means which our senses are capable of receiving, otherwise than by the universal display of himself in the works of the creation, and by that repugnance we feel in ourselves to bad actions, and disposition to good ones.

"The most detestable wickedness, the most horrid cruelties, and the greatest miseries, that have afflicted the human race, have had their origin in this thing called revelation, or revealed religion. It has been the most dishonourable belief against the character of the Divinity, the most destructive to morality, and the peace and happiness of man, that ever was propagated since man began to exist. It is better, far better, that we admitted, if it were possible, a thousand devils to roam at large, and to preach publicly the doctrine of devils, if there were any such, than that we permitted one such impostor and monster as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the Bible-prophets, to come with the pretended word of God in his mouth, and have credit among us.

"Whence arose all the horrid assassinations of whole nations of men, women, and infants, with which the Bible is filled; and the bloody persecutions, and tortures unto death, and religious wars, that since that time have laid Europe in blood and ashes; whence

arose they, but from this impious thing called revealed religion, and this monstrous belief, that God has spoken to man? The lies of the Bible have been the cause of the one, and the lies of the Testament of the other.

“Some Christians pretend, that Christianity was not established by the sword; but of what period of time do they speak? It was impossible that twelve men could begin with the sword; they had not the power; but no sooner were the professors of Christianity sufficiently powerful to employ the sword, than they did so, and the stake and the faggot too; and Mahomet could not do it sooner. By the same spirit that Peter cut off the ear of the high priest's servant (if the story be true) he would have cut off his head, and the head of his master, had he been able. Besides this, Christianity grounds itself originally upon the Bible, and the Bible was established altogether by the sword, and that in the worst use of it; not to terrify, but to extirpate. The Jews made no converts, they butchered all. The Bible is the sire of the Testament, and both are called the *word of God*. The Christians read both books; the ministers preach from both books; and this thing called Christianity is made up of both. It is then false to say that Christianity was not established by the sword.

“The only sect that has not persecuted are the Quakers: and the only reason that can be given for it is, that they are rather Deists than Christians. They do not believe much about Jesus Christ, and they call the Scriptures a dead letter. Had they called them by a worse name, they had been nearer the truth.

“It is incumbent on every man who reverences the character of the Creator, and who wishes to lessen the catalogue of artificial miseries, and remove the cause that has sown persecutions thick among mankind, to expel all ideas of revealed religion as a dangerous heresy, and an impious fraud. What is it that we have learned from this pretended thing called revealed religion?—nothing that is useful to man, and every thing that is dishonourable to his Maker. What is it the Bible teaches us?—rapine, cruelty, and murder. What is it the Testament teaches us?—to believe that the Almighty committed debauchery with a woman engaged to be married; and the belief of this debauchery is called faith.

“As to the fragments of morality that are irregularly and thinly scattered in those books, they make no part of this pretended thing, called revealed religion. They are the natural dictates of conscience, and the bonds by which society is held together, and without which it cannot exist; and are nearly the same in all religions, and in all societies. The Testament teaches nothing new upon this subject; and where it attempts to exceed, it becomes mean and ridiculous. The doctrine of not retaliating injuries is much better expressed in Proverbs, which is a collection as well from the Gentiles as the Jews, than it is in the Testament. It is there said, Proverbs xxv. ver. 21, *‘If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be*

thirsty, give him water to drink :* but when it is said, as in the Testament, *'If a man smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;'* it is assassinating the dignity of forbearance, and sinking man into a spaniel.

"*Loving of enemies*, is another dogma of feigned morality, and has besides no meaning. It is incumbent on man, as a moralist, that he does not revenge an injury; and it is equally as good in a political sense, for there is no end to retaliation; each retaliates on the other, and calls it justice; but to love in proportion to the injury, if it could be done, would be to offer a premium for a crime. Besides, the word *enemies* is too vague and general to be used in a moral maxim, which ought always to be clear and defined, like a proverb. If a man be the enemy of another from mistake and prejudice, as in the case of religious opinions, and sometimes in politics, that man is different to an enemy at heart with a criminal intention; and it is incumbent upon us, and it contributes also to our own tranquillity, that we put the best construction upon a thing that it will bear. But even this erroneous motive in him makes no motive for love on the other part; and to say that we can love voluntarily, and without a motive, is morally and physically impossible.

"Morality is injured by prescribing to it duties, that, in the first place, are impossible to be performed; and, if they could be, would be productive of evil; or, as before said, be premiums for crime. The maxim of *doing as we would be done unto*, does not include this strange doctrine of loving enemies; for no man expects to be loved himself for his crime or for his enmity.

"Those who preach this doctrine of loving their enemies, are in general the greatest persecutors, and they act consistently by so doing; for the doctrine is hypocritical, and it is natural that hypocrisy should act the reverse of what it preaches. For my own part, I disown the doctrine, and consider it as a feigned or fabulous morality; yet the man does not exist that can say I have persecuted him, or any man, or any set of men, either in the American Revolution, or in the French Revolution; or that I have, in any case, returned evil for evil.—

* According to what is called Christ's sermon on the mount in the book of Matthew, where, among some other good things, a great deal of this feigned morality is introduced, it is there expressly said, that the doctrine of forbearance, or of not retaliating injuries, *was not any part of the doctrine of the Jews*; but as this doctrine is found in Proverbs, it must, according to that statement, have been copied from the Gentiles, from whom Christ had learned it. Those men, whom Jewish and Christian idolators have abusively called heathens, had much better and clearer ideas of justice and morality than are to be found in the Old Testament, so far as it is Jewish; or in the New. The answer of Solon on the question, 'Which is the most perfect popular government?' has never been exceeded by any man since his time, as containing a maxim of political morality. 'That,' says he, *'where the least injury done to the meanest individual is considered as an insult on the whole constitution.'* Solon lived about 500 years before Christ."

Gentlemen, as a proof of this assertion, I will relate to you an anecdote, shewing the character of Mr. Paine, that occurred during the French Revolution.

Mr. Paine happened to be dining one day with a few friends at a Coffee House in Paris, delivered his opinion very freely on the English Government, and much to the satisfaction of every one present, with the exception of a Captain of the English army, who walked up to the part of the room where Mr. Paine was sitting, and struck him a violent blow, which nearly knocked him off his seat. An alarm was instantly given that the Captain had struck a Citizen Deputy of the Convention, which was considered an insult to the nation at large; the offender was hurried into custody, and it was with the greatest difficulty that Mr. Paine prevented him from being executed on the spot.

It ought to be observed, that an act of the Convention had awarded the punishment of death to any one who should be convicted of striking a deputy: Mr. Paine was therefore placed in a very unpleasant situation. He immediately applied to Barrere, at that time President of the Committee of Public Safety, for a passport for his imprudent adversary, who after much hesitation complied with his request. It likewise occasioned Mr. Paine considerable personal inconvenience to procure his liberation; but even this was not sufficient; the Captain was without friends and penniless, and Mr. Paine generously supplied him with money to defray his travelling expences.

This, Gentlemen, I think, is a satisfactory proof of the humane and benevolent character of Mr. Paine.

—— But it is not incumbent on man to reward a bad action with a good one, or to return good for evil; and wherever it is done, it is a voluntary act, and not a duty. It is also absurd to suppose, that such doctrine can make any part of a revealed religion. We imitate the moral character of the Creator by forbearing with each other, for he forbears with all; but this doctrine would imply that he loved man, not in proportion as he was good, but as he was bad.

“ If we consider the nature of our condition here, we must see there is no occasion for such a thing as *revealed religion*. What is it we want to know? Does not the creation, the universe we behold, preach to us the existence of an Almighty power that governs and regulates the whole? And is not the evidence that this creation holds out to our senses infinitely stronger than any thing we can read in a book, that any impostor might make and call the word

of God? As for morality, the knowledge of it exists in every man's conscience.

"Here we are. The existence of an Almighty power is sufficiently demonstrated to us, though we cannot conceive, as it is impossible we should, the nature and manner of its existence. We cannot conceive how we came here ourselves, and yet we know for a fact that we are here. We must know also, that the power that called us into being, can, if he please, and when he pleases, call us to account for the manner in which we have lived here; and, therefore, without seeking any other motive for the belief, it is rational to believe that he will, for we know before-hand that he can. The probability, or even possibility of the thing is all that we ought to know; for if we knew it as a fact, we should be the mere slaves of terror; our belief would have no merit, and our best actions no virtue.

"Deism then, teaches us, without the possibility of being deceived, all that is necessary or proper to be known. The creation is the Bible of the Deist. He there reads, in the hand-writing of the Creator himself, the certainty of his existence, and the immutability of his power, and all other Bibles and Testaments are to him forgeries. The probability that we may be called to account hereafter, will, to a reflecting mind, have the influence of belief; for it is not our belief or disbelief that can make or unmake the fact. As this is the state we are in, and which it is proper we should be in, as free agents, it is the fool only, and not the philosopher, or even the prudent man, that would live as if there were no God.

"But the belief of a God is so weakened by being mixed with the strange fable of the Christian creed, and with the wild adventures related in the Bible, and the obscurity and obscene nonsense of the Testament, that the mind of man is bewildered as in a fog. Viewing all these things in a confused mass, he confounds fact with fable; and as he cannot believe all, he feels a disposition to reject all. But the belief of a God is a belief distinct from all other things, and ought not to be confounded with any. The notion of a Trinity of Gods has enfeebled the belief of one God. A multiplicity of beliefs acts as a division of belief; and in proportion as any thing is divided it is weakened.

"Religion, by such means, becomes a thing of form, instead of fact; of notion instead of principle; morality is banished to make room for an imaginary thing called faith, and this faith has its origin in a supposed debauchery; a man is preached instead of God; an execution is an object for gratitude; the preachers daub themselves with the blood, like a troop of assassins, and pretend to admire the brilliancy it gives them; they preach a humdrum sermon on the merits of the execution; then praise Jesus Christ for being executed, and condemn the Jews for doing it.

"A man, by hearing all this nonsense lumped and preached

together, confounds the God of the creation with the imagined God of the Christians, and lives as if there were none.

“Of all the systems of religion that ever were invented, there is none more derogatory to the Almighty, more unedifying to man, more repugnant to reason, and more contradictory in itself, than this thing called Christianity. Too absurd for belief, too impossible to convince, and too inconsistent for practice, it renders the heart torpid, or produces only atheists and fanatics. As an engine of power, it serves the purpose of despotism; and as a means of wealth, the avarice of priests; but so far as respects the good of man in general, it leads to nothing here or hereafter.

“The only religion that has not been invented, and that has in it every evidence of divine originality, is pure and simple Deism. It must have been the first, and will probably be the last that man believes. But pure and simple Deism does not answer the purpose of despotic governments. They cannot lay hold of religion as an engine, but by mixing it with human inventions, and making their own authority a part; neither does it answer the avarice of priests, but by incorporating themselves and their functions with it, and becoming, like the government, a party in the system. It is this that forms the otherwise mysterious connection of church and state; the church humane, and the state tyrannic.

“Were a man impressed as fully and as strongly as he ought to be, with the belief of a God, his moral life would be regulated by the force of that belief; he would stand in awe of God, and of himself, and would not do the thing that could not be concealed from either. To give this belief the full opportunity of force, it is necessary that it acts alone. This is Deism.

“But when, according to the Christian Trinitarian scheme, one part of God is represented by a dying man, and another part called the Holy Ghost, by a flying pigeon, it is impossible that belief can attach itself to such wild conceits.*

“It has been the scheme of the Christian church, and of all the other invented systems of religion, to hold man in ignorance of the Creator, as it is of government to hold man in ignorance of his rights. The systems of the one are as false as those of the other, and are calculated for mutual support. The study of theology, as it stands in Christian churches, is the study of nothing; it is founded on nothing; it rests on no principles; it proceeds by no authorities; it has no data; it can demonstrate nothing; and it admits of no conclusion. Not any thing can be studied as

* The book called the Book of Matthew, says, chap. iii. ver. 16, that *the Holy Ghost descended in the shape of a dove*. It might as well have said a goose; the creatures are equally harmless, and the one is as much a nonsensical lie as the other. The second of Acts, ver. 2, 3, says, that it descended in a mighty *rushing wind*, in the shape of *cloven tongues*: perhaps it was cloven feet. Such absurd stuff is only fit for tales of witches and wizards.”

a science, without our being in possession of the principles upon which it is founded ; and as this is not the case with Christian theology, it is therefore the study of nothing.

“ Instead then of studying theology, as is now done, out of the Bible and Testament, the meaning of which books are always controverted, and the authenticity of which is disproved, it is necessary that we refer to the Bible of the creation. The principles we discover there are eternal, and of divine origin : they are the foundation of all the science that exists in the world, and must be the foundation of theology.

“ We can know God only through his works. We cannot have a conception of any one attribute, but by following some principle that leads to it. We have only a confused idea of his power, if we have not the means of comprehending something of its immensity. We can have no idea of his wisdom, but by knowing the order and manner in which it acts. The principles of science lead to this knowledge ; for the Creator of man is the Creator of science, and it is through that medium that man can see God, as it were, face to face.

“ Could a man be placed in a situation, and endowed with power of vision, to behold at one view, and to contemplate deliberately, the structure of the universe ; to mark the movements of the several planets, the cause of their varying appearances, the unerring order in which they revolve, even to the remotest comet ; their connections and dependence on each other ; and to know the system of laws established by the Creator, that governs and regulates the whole ; he would then conceive, far beyond what any church theology can teach him, the power, the wisdom, the vastness, the munificence of the Creator ; he would then see, that all the knowledge man has of science, and that all the mechanical arts by which he renders his situation comfortable here, are derived from that source : his mind, exalted by the scene, and convinced by the fact, would increase in gratitude as it increased in knowledge ; his religion or his worship would become united with his improvement as a man ; any employment he followed, that had connection with the principles of the creation, as every thing of agriculture, of science, and of the mechanical arts, has, would teach him more of God, and of the gratitude he owes to him than any theological Christian sermon he now hears. Great objects inspire great thoughts ; great munificence excites great gratitude ; but the groveling tales and doctrines of the Bible and Testament are fit only to excite contempt.

“ Though man cannot arrive, at least in this life, at the actual scene I have described, he can demonstrate it ; because he has a knowledge of the principles upon which the creation is constructed. We know that the greatest works can be represented in model, and that the universe can be represented by the same means. The same principles by which we measure an inch, or an acre of ground,

will measure to millions extent. A circle of an inch diameter has the same geometrical properties as a circle that would circumscribe the universe. The same properties of a triangle that will demonstrate upon paper the course of a ship, will do it on the ocean; and when applied to what are called the heavenly bodies, will ascertain to a minute the time of an eclipse, though these bodies are millions of miles distant from us. This knowledge is of divine origin; and it is from the Bible of the creation that man has learned it, and not from the stupid Bible of the church, that teacheth man nothing.*

“All the knowledge man has of science and of machinery, by the aid of which his existence is rendered comfortable upon earth, and without which he would be scarcely distinguishable in appearance and condition from a common animal, comes from the great machine and structure of the universe. The constant and unwearied observations of our ancestors upon the movements and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, in what are supposed to have been the early ages of the world, have brought this knowledge upon earth. It is not Moses and the prophets, nor Jesus Christ, nor his apostles, that have done it. The Almighty is the great mechanic of the creation; the first philosopher and original teacher of all science:—Let us, then, learn to reverence our master, and not let us forget the labours of our ancestors.

“Had we at this day no knowledge of machinery, and were it possible that man could have a view, as I have before described, of the structure and machinery of the universe, he would soon conceive the idea of constructing some at least of the mechanical works we now have; and the idea so conceived would progressively advance in practice. Or could a model of the universe, such as is called an orrery, be presented before him and put in motion, his mind would arrive at the same idea. Such an object and such a subject would, whilst it improved him in knowledge useful to himself as a man and a member of society, as well as entertaining

* “The Bible-makers have undertaken to give me, in the first chapter of Genesis, an account of the creation; and in doing this, they have demonstrated nothing but their ignorance. They make there to have been three days and three nights, evenings and mornings, before there was a sun; when it is the presence or absence of the sun that is the cause of day and night—and what is called his rising and setting, that of morning and evening. Besides, it is a puerile and pitiful idea, to suppose the Almighty to say, ‘Let there be light.’ It is the imperative manner of speaking that a conjuror uses, when he says to his cups and balls, Presto, he gone—and most probably has been taken from it, as Moses and his rod are a conjuror and his wand. Longinus calls this expression the sublime; and by the same rule, the conjuror is sublime too; for the manner of speaking is expressively and grammatically the same. When authors and critics talk of the sublime, they see not how nearly it borders on the ridiculous. The sublime of the critics, like some parts of Edmund Burke’s sublime and beautiful, is like a wind-mill just visible in a fog, which imagination might distort into a flying mountain, or an archangel, or a flock of wild geese.”

afford far better matter for impressing him with a knowledge of, and a belief in, the Creator, and of the reverence and gratitude that man owes to him, than the stupid texts of the Bible and Testament, from which, be the talents of the preacher what they may, only stupid sermons can be preached. If man must preach, let him preach something that is edifying, and from texts that are known to be true.

“ The Bible of the creation is inexhaustible in texts. Every part of science, whether connected with the geometry of the universe, with the systems of animal and vegetable life, or with the properties of inanimate matter, is a text as well for devotion as for philosophy—for gratitude as for human improvement. It will perhaps be said, that if such a revolution in the system of religion take place, every preacher ought to be a philosopher. *Most certainly*; and every house of devotion a school of science.

“ It has been by wandering from the immutable laws of science, and the right use of reason, and setting up an invented thing called revealed religion, that so many wild and blasphemous conceits have been formed of the Almighty. The Jews have made him the assassin of the human species, to make room for the religion of the Jews. The Christians have made him the murderer of himself, and the founder of a new religion, to supersede and expel the Jewish religion. And to find pretence and admission for these things, they must have supposed his power or his wisdom imperfect, or his will changeable; and the changeableness of the will is the imperfection of the judgment. The philosopher knows that the laws of the Creator have never changed with respect either to the principles of science, or the properties of matter. Why, then, is it to be supposed they have changed with respect to man?

“ I here close the subject. I have shewn in all the foregoing parts of this work that the Bible and Testament are impositions and forgeries; and I leave the evidence I have produced in proof of it to be refuted, if any one can do it; and I leave the ideas that are suggested in the conclusion of the work to rest on the mind of the reader; certain as I am, that when opinions are free, either in matters of government or religion, truth will finally and powerfully prevail.”

Gentlemen, I have now concluded the Second Part of the Age of Reason, and I see nothing either dangerous or immoral throughout it. Why, then, if it do not contain one single immoral sentiment, should I be dragged here for fine and imprisonment, in the event of your verdict being against me, and handed over by you to my persecutors, to be by them thrown perhaps into a dungeon, there to rot and pine, and deprive me of all assistance and consolation? I say,

Gentlemen, let me have the Age of Reason to preach from, let the Attorney-General take the Bible, and you will soon see who makes the greater number of converts.

(Mr. Carlile then continued to read the Age of Reason, Part III. which he commenced at half-past 7 o'clock.)

“ To the Ministers and Preachers of all Denominations of Religion.

“ It is the duty of every man, as far as his ability extends, to detect and expose delusion and error. But nature has not given to every one a talent for the purpose ; and among those to whom such a talent is given, there is often a want of disposition or of courage to do it.

“ The world, or more properly speaking, that small part of it called Christendom, or the Christian world, has been amused for more than a thousand years with accounts of Prophecies in the Old Testament, about the coming of the person called Jesus Christ, and thousands of sermons have been preached, and volumes written, to make man believe it.

“ In the following treatise I have examined all the passages in the New Testament, quoted from the Old, and called prophecies concerning Jesus Christ, and I find no such thing as a prophecy of any such person, and I deny there are any. The passages all relate to circumstances the Jewish nation was in at the time they were written or spoken, and not to any thing that was or was not to happen in the world seven hundred years afterwards ; and I have shewn what the circumstances were, to which the passages apply or refer. I have given chapter and verse for every thing I have said, and have not gone out of the books of the Old and New Testament for evidence, that the passages are not prophecies of the person called Jesus Christ.

“ The prejudice of unfounded belief often degenerates into the prejudice of custom, and becomes, at last, rank hypocrisy. When men, from custom, or fashion, or any worldly motive, profess or pretend to believe what they do not believe, nor can give any reason for believing, they unship the helm of their morality, and being no longer honest to their own minds, they feel no moral difficulty in being unjust to others. It is from the influence of this vice, hypocrisy, that we see so many Church and Meeting-going professors and pretenders to religion, so full of trick and deceit in their dealings, and so loose in the performance of their engagements, that they are not to be trusted further than the laws of the country will bind them. Morality has no hold on their minds, no restraint on their actions.

“ One set of preachers make salvation to consist in believing. They tell their congregations, that if they believe in Christ, their

sins shall be forgiven. This, in the first place, is an encouragement to sin, in a similar manner as when a prodigal young fellow is told his father will pay all his debts, he runs into debt the faster, and becomes the more extravagant: Daddy, says he, pays all, and on he goes. Just so in the other case, *Christ pays all*, and on goes the sinner.

"In the next place, the doctrine these men preach is not true. The New Testament rests itself for credibility and testimony on what are called prophecies in the Old Testament, of the person called Jesus Christ; and if there are no such thing as prophecies of any such person in the Old Testament, the New Testament is a forgery of the councils of Nice and Laodocia, and the faith founded thereon, delusion and falsehood.*

"Another set of preachers tell their congregations that God predestinated and selected from all eternity, a certain number to be saved, and a certain number to be damned eternally. If this were true, *the day of Judgment is PAST: their preaching is in vain*, and they had better work at some useful calling for their livelihood.

"This doctrine, also, like the former, hath a direct tendency to demoralize mankind. Can a bad man be reformed by telling him, that if he is one of those who were decreed to be damned before he was born, his reformation will do him no good; and if he was decreed to be saved, he will be saved whether he believes it or not? for this is the result of the doctrine. Such preaching and such preachers do injury to the moral world. They had better be at the plough.

"As in my political works, my motive and object have been to give man an elevated sense of his own character, and free him from the slavish and superstitious absurdity of monarchy and hereditary government, so in my publications on religious subjects, my endeavours have been directed to bring man to a right use of the reason that God has given him; to impress on him the great principles of divine morality, justice, mercy, and a benevolent disposition to all men, and to all creatures, and to inspire in him a spirit of trust, confidence, and consolation in his Creator, unshackled by the fables of books pretending to be *the word of God*.

"THOMAS PAINE."

"ESSAY ON DREAMS.

"In order to understand the nature of dreams, or of that which passes in ideal vision during a state of sleep, it is first necessary

* The Councils of Nice and Laodocia were held about 350 years after the time Christ is said to have lived; and the books that now compose the New Testament, were then voted for by YEAS and NAYS, as we now vote a law. A great many that were offered had a majority of *nays*, and were rejected. This is the way the New Testament came into being."

to understand the composition and decomposition of the human mind.

“ The three great faculties of the mind are IMAGINATION, JUDGMENT, and MEMORY. Every action of the mind comes under one or other of these faculties. In a state of wakefulness, as in the day-time, these three faculties are all active; but that is seldom the case in sleep, and never perfectly, and this is the cause that our dreams are not so regular and rational as our waking thoughts.

“ The seat of that collection of powers or faculties, that constitute what is called the mind, is in the brain. There is not, and cannot be, any visible demonstration of this anatomically, but accidents happening to living persons, shew it to be so. An injury done to the brain by a fracture of the skull will sometimes change a wise man into a childish idiot, a being without mind. But so careful has nature been of that *sanctum sanctorum* of man, the brain, that of all the external accidents to which humanity is subject, this happens the most seldom. But we often see it happening by long and habitual intemperance.

“ Whether these three faculties occupy distinct apartments of the brain, is known only to that Almighty power that formed and organized it. We can see the external effects of muscular motion in all the members of the body, though its *primum mobile*, or first moving cause is unknown to man. Our external motions are sometimes the effect of intention, and sometimes not. If we are sitting and intend to rise, or standing and intend to sit, or to walk, the limbs obey that intention as if they heard the order given. But we make a thousand motions every day, and that as well waking as sleeping, that have no prior intention to direct them. Each member acts as if it had a will or a mind of its own. Man governs the whole when he pleases to govern, but in the interims the several parts, like little suburbs, govern themselves without consulting the sovereign.

“ But all these motions, whatever be the generating cause, are external and visible. But with respect to the brain, no ocular observation can be made upon it. All is mystery: all is darkness in that womb of thought.

“ Whether the brain is a mass of matter in continual rest; whether it has a vibrating pulsative motion, or a heaving and falling motion, like matter in fermentation; whether different parts of the brain have different motions according to the faculty that is employed, be it the imagination, the judgment, or the memory, man knows nothing of. He knows not the cause of his own wit. His own brain conceals it from him.

“ Comparing invisible by visible things, as metaphysical can sometimes be compared to physical things, the operations of these distinct and several faculties have some resemblance to the mechanism of a watch. The main spring which puts all in motion, cor-

responds to the imagination; the pendulum or balance, which corrects and regulates that motion, corresponds to the judgment; and the hand and dial, like the memory, record the operations.

"Now in proportion as these several faculties sleep, slumber, or keep awake, during the continuance of a dream, in that proportion will the dream be reasonable or frantic, remembered or forgotten.

"If there is any faculty in mental man that never sleeps, it is that volatile thing the imagination: the case is different with the judgment and memory. The sedate and sober constitution of the judgment easily disposes it to rest; and as to the memory, it records in silence, and is active only when it is called upon.

"That the judgment soon goes to sleep may be perceived by our sometimes beginning to dream before we are fully asleep ourselves. Some random thought runs in the mind, and we start, as it were into recollection that we are dreaming between sleeping and waking.

"If the judgment sleeps whilst the imagination keeps awake, the dream will be a riotous assemblage of mis-shapen images and ranting ideas, and the more active the imagination is, the wilder the dream will be. The most inconsistent and the most impossible things will appear right; because that faculty whose province it is to keep order, is in a state of absence. The master of the school is gone out, and the boys are in an uproar.

"If the memory sleeps, we shall have no other knowledge of the dream than that we have dreamt, without knowing what it was about. In this case it is sensation, rather than recollection, that acts. The dream has given us some sense of pain or trouble, and we feel it as a hurt, rather than remember it as a vision.

"If memory only slumbers, we shall have a faint remembrance of the dream, and after a few minutes it will sometimes happen that the principal passages of the dream will occur to us more fully. The cause of this is that the memory will sometimes continue slumbering or sleeping after we are awake ourselves, and that so fully, that it may, and sometimes does happen, that we do not immediately recollect where we are, nor what we have been about, or have to do. But when the memory starts into wakefulness, it brings the knowledge of these things back upon us, like a flood of light, and sometimes the dream with it.

"But the most curious circumstance of the mind in a state of dream, is the power it has to become the agent of every person, character, and thing, of which it dreams. It carries on conversation with several, asks questions, hears answers, gives and receives information, and it acts all these parts itself.

"But however various and eccentric the imagination may be in the creation of images and ideas, it cannot supply the place of memory, with respect to things that are forgotten when we are awake. For example, if we have forgotten the name of a person,

and dream of seeing him, and asking him his name, he cannot tell it; for it is ourselves asking ourselves the question.

"But though the imagination cannot supply the place of real memory it has the wild faculty of counterfeiting memory. It dreams of persons it never knew, and talks with them as if it remembered them as old acquaintances. It relates circumstances that never happened, and tells them as if they had happened. It goes to places that never existed, and knows where all the streets and houses are as if it had been there before. The scenes it creates often appear as scenes remembered. It will sometimes act a dream within a dream, and, in the delusion of dreaming, tell a dream it never dreamed, and tell it as if it was from memory. It may also be remarked, that the imagination in a dream, has no idea of time, as *time*. It counts only by circumstances; and if a succession of circumstances pass in a dream that would require a great length of time to accomplish them, it will appear to the dreamer that a length of time equal thereto has passed also.

"As this is the state of mind in dream it may rationally be said that every person is mad once in twenty-four hours, for were he to act in the day as he dreams in the night he would be confined for a lunatic. In a state of wakefulness those three faculties being all active and acting in union constitute the rational man. In dreams it is otherwise, and therefore that state which is called insanity appears to be no other than a disunion of those faculties and a cessation of the judgment, during wakefulness, that we so often experience during sleep; and idiocy, into which some persons have fallen, is that cessation of all the faculties of which we can be sensible when we happen to wake before our memory.

"In this view of the mind how absurd it is to place reliance upon dreams, and how much more absurd to make them a foundation for religion; yet the belief that Jesus Christ is the son of God, begotten by the Holy Ghost, a being never heard of before, stands on the story of an old man's dream. *"And behold the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Joseph thou son of David, fear not thou to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost."* Matt. ch. I. ver. 20.

"After this we have the childish stories of three or four other dreams; about Joseph going into Egypt; about his coming back again; about this, and about that, and this story of dreams has thrown Europe into a dream for more than a thousand years. All the efforts that nature, reason, and conscience have made to awaken man from it have been ascribed by priestcraft and superstition to the workings of the devil, and had it not been for the American revolution, which, by establishing the *universal right of conscience*, first opened the way to free discussion, and for the French revolution which followed, this religion of dreams had continued to be preached, and that after it had ceased to be believed. Those who preached it

and did not believe it, still believed the delusion necessary. They were not bold enough to be honest, nor honest enough to be bold.

"Every new religion, like a new play, requires a new apparatus of dresses and machinery, to fit the new characters it creates.—The story of Christ in the New Testament brings a new being upon the stage, which it calls the Holy Ghost, and the story of Abraham, the father of the Jews, in the Old Testament, gives existence to a new order of beings it calls Angels—There was no Holy Ghost before the time of Christ, nor Angels before the time of Abraham.—We hear nothing of these winged gentlemen, till more than two thousand years according to the Bible chronology, from the time they say the heavens, the earth and all therein were made:—After this, they hop about as thick as birds in a grove:—The first we hear of, pays his addresses to Hagar in the wilderness; then three of them visit Sarah; another wrestles a fall with Jacob, and these birds of passage having found their way to earth and back, are continually coming and going.—They eat and drink, and up again to heaven.—What they do with the food they carry away in their bellies the Bible does not tell us.—Perhaps they do as the birds do, discharge it as they fly, for neither the scripture nor the church hath told us there are necessary houses for them in heaven,

"One would think that a system loaded with such gross and vulgar absurdities as scripture religion is, could never have obtained credit, yet we have seen what priestcraft and fanaticism could do, and credulity believe.

"From angels in the Old Testament we get to prophets, to witches, to seers of visions, and dreamers of dreams, and sometimes we are told as in 2 Sam. ch. 9. ver. 15. that God whispers in the ear—At other times we are not told how the impulse was given or whether sleeping or waking—In 2 Sam. ch. 24. ver. 1. it is said, "*And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say go number Israel and Judah.*"—And in 1 Chron. ch. 21. ver. 1. when the same story is again related, it is said, "*and Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel.*"

"Whether this was done sleeping or waking; we are not told, but it seems that David whom they call "a man after God's own heart" did not know by what spirit he was moved, and as to the men called inspired penmen they agree so well about the matter, that in one book they say that it was God, and in the other that it was the Devil.

"Yet this is the trash, that the church imposes upon the world as the word of God; this is the collection of lies, and contradictions, called the Holy Bible! this is the rubbish called revealed religion!

"The idea that writers of the Old Testament had of a God was boisterous, contemptible and vulgar.—They make him the Mars of the Jews, the fighting God of Israel, the conjuring God of their Priests and Prophets.—They tell as many fables of him as the Greeks told of Hercules.

“ They pit him against Pharoah, as it were to box with him, and Moses carries the challenge: they make their God to say insultingly, “ *I will get me honour upon Pharoah, and upon his Host, upon his Chariots and upon his Horsemen.*”—And that he may keep his word, they make him set a trap in the Red Sea in the dead of night, for Pharoah, his host, and his horses, and drown them as a rat-catcher would do so many rats—Great honour indeed! the story of Jack the Giant-killer is better told!

“ They match him against the Egyptian magicians to conjure with them, and after hard conjuring on both sides, (for where there is no great contest, there is no great honour) they bring him off victorious; the three first essays are a dead match—Each party turns his rod into a serpent, the rivers into blood, and creates frogs, but upon the fourth, the God of the Israelites obtains the laurel, and he covers them all over with lice!—The Egyptian magicians cannot do the same, and this lonsy triumph proclaims the victory!

“ They make their God to rain fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, and belch fire and smoke upon mount Sinai: as if he was the Pluto of the lower regions.—They make him salt Lot's wife like pickled pork; they make him pass like Shakspeare's Queen Mab into the brain of their priests, prophets and prophetesses and tickle them into dreams; and after making him play all kind of tricks, they confound him with Satan, and leave us at a loss to know what God they meant!

“ This is the descriptive God of the Old Testament: and as to the New, though the authors of it have varied the scene, they have continued the vulgarity.

“ Is man ever to be the dupe of priestcraft, the slave of superstition? Is he never to have just ideas of his Creator? It is better not to believe there is a God than to believe of him falsely. When we behold the mighty universe that surrounds us, and dart our contemplation, into the eternity of space, filled with innumerable orbs, revolving in eternal harmony, how paltry must the tales of the Old and New Testaments, prophanelly called the word of God, appear to thoughtful man! The stupendous wisdom, and unerring order, that reign and govern throughout this wondrous whole, and call us to reflection, *put to shame the Bible!*—The God of eternity and of all that is real, is not the God of passing dreams, and shadows of man's imagination! The God of truth, is not the God of fable; the belief of a God begotten and a God crucified, is a God blasphemed.—It is making a profane use of reason.

“ I shall conclude this Essay on Dreams with the two first verses of the 34th chapter of Ecclesiasticus, one of the books of the Apocrypha.

“ Ver. 1. “ *The hopes of a man void of understanding are vain and false; and dreams lift up fools—Whoso regardeth dreams is like him that catcheth at a shadow, and followeth after the wind.*”

“ I now proceed to an examination of the passages in the Bible

called prophecies of the coming of Christ, and to shew there are no prophecies of any such person. That the passages clandestinely styled prophecies are not prophecies, and that they refer to circumstances the Jewish nation was in at the time they were written or spoken, and not to any distance or future time or person.

“AN EXAMINATION OF THE PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT,

Quoted from the old, and called prophecies of the coming of Jesus Christ.

“THE passages called Prophecies of, or concerning, Jesus Christ, in the Old Testament, may be classed under the two following heads :

“First, those referred to in the four books of the New Testament called the Four Evangelists, *Matthew, Mark, Luke and John*.

“Secondly, those which translators and commentators, have, of their own imagination, erected into prophecies, and dubbed with that title, at the head of the several chapters of the Old Testament. Of these it is scarcely worth while to waste time, ink and paper upon, I shall therefore confine myself chiefly to those referred to in the aforesaid four books of the New Testament. If I shew that these are not prophecies of the person called Jesus Christ, nor have reference to any such person, it will be perfectly needless to combat those which translators or the Church have invented, and for which they had no other authority than their own imagination.

“I begin with the book called the Gospel according to St. Matthew.

“In the first chap. ver. 18. it is said, “*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was in this wise ; when his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, SHE WAS FOUND WITH CHILD BY THE HOLY GHOST.*”—This is going a little too fast ; because to make this verse agree with the next, it should have said no more than that *she was found with child*: for the next verse says, *Then Joseph her husband being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.*—Consequently Joseph had found out no more than that she was with child, and he knew it was not by himself.

“Ver. 20. “*And while he thought of these things (that is, whether he should put her away privily or make a public example of her) “ behold the Angel of the Lord appeared to him IN A DREAM, (that is Joseph dreamed that an angel appeared unto him, “ saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son and call his name Jesus : for he shall save his people from their sins.”*

“Now without entering into any discussion upon the merits or de-

merits of the account here given, it is proper to observe, that it has no higher authority than that of a dream: for it is impossible for a man to behold any thing in a dream but that which he dreams of. I ask not, therefore, whether Joseph, (if there were such a man) had such a dream or not, because, admitting he had, it proves nothing. So wonderful and irrational is the faculty of the mind in dream, that it acts the part of all the characters its imagination creates, and what it thinks it hears from any of them is no other than what the roving rapidity of its own imagination invents. It is therefore nothing to me what Joseph dreamed of; whether of the fidelity or infidelity of his wife: I pay no regard to my own dreams, and I should be weak indeed to put faith in the dreams of another.

“The verses that follow those I have quoted, are the words of the writer of the book of Matthew. *“Now (says he) all this (that is, all this dreaming and this pregnancy) was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord, by the prophet, saying,*

“Behold a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.”

“This passage is in Isaiah, chap. 7. ver. 14, and the writer of the book of Matthew endeavours to make his readers believe that this passage is a prophecy of the person called Jesus Christ. It is no such thing; and I go to shew it is not. But it is first necessary that I explain the occasion of these words being spoken by Isaiah. The reader will then easily perceive that so far from their being a prophecy of Jesus Christ, they have not the least reference to such a person, or to any thing that could happen in the time that Christ is said to have lived, which was about seven hundred years after the time of Isaiah. The case is this:

“On the death of Solomon the Jewish nation split into two monarchies: one called the kingdom of Judah, the capital of which was Jerusalem; the other the kingdom of Israel, the capital of which was Samaria. The kingdom of Judah followed the line of David, and the kingdom of Israel that of Saul; and these two rival monarchies frequently carried on fierce wars against each other.

“At the time Ahaz was king of Judah, which was in the time of Isaiah, Pekah was king of Israel: and Pekah joined himself to Rezin, king of Syria, to make war against Ahaz, king of Judah, and these two kings marched a confederated and powerful army against Jerusalem. Ahaz and his people became alarmed at the danger, and *“their hearts were moved, as the trees of the wood are moved with the wind.”* Isaiah chap. 7. ver. 3.

“In this perilous situation of things, Isaiah addresses himself to Ahaz, and assures him in the name of the Lord, (the cant phrase of all the prophets) that these two kings should not succeed against him; and to assure him that this should be the case (the case was however directly contrary*), tells Ahaz, to ask a sign of the

* Chron. chap. 28. ver. 1st. “Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to

Lord. This Ahaz declined doing, giving as a reason that he would not tempt the Lord; upon which Isaiah, who pretends to be sent from God, says, ver. 14. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign, *behold a virgin shall conceive and bare a son—butter and honey shall he eat that he may know to refuse the evil and choose the good*—For before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land which thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings," meaning the king of Israel and the king of Syria who were marching against him.

"Here then is the sign, which was to be the birth of a child, and that child a son; and here also is the time limited for the accomplishment of the sign, namely, before the child should know to refuse the evil and choose the good.

"The thing therefore to be a sign of success to Ahaz must be something that would take place before the event of the battle then pending between him and the two kings could be known. A thing to be a sign must precede the thing signified. The sign of rain must be before the rain.

"It would have been mockery and insulting nonsense for Isaiah to have assured Ahaz as a sign that these two kings should not prevail against him, that a child should be born seven hundred years after he was dead, and that before the child so born should know to refuse the evil and choose the good, he, Ahaz, should be delivered from the danger he was then immediately threatened with.

"But the case is, that the child of which Isaiah speaks *was his own child*, with which his wife, or his mistress, was then pregnant, for he says in the next chapter, ver. 2, "*and I took unto me faithful witnesses to record Uriah the priest, and Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah, and I went unto the prophetess, and she conceived and bare a son,*" and he says at ver. 18 of the same chapter, "*Behold I, and the children whom the Lord hath given me, are for signs and for wonders in Israel.*"

"It may not be improper here to observe, that the word translated a *virgin* in Isaiah, does not signify a virgin in Hebrew, but merely a *young woman*. The tense also is falsified in the translation. Levi gives the Hebrew text of the 14th verse of the 7th chapter of Isaiah and the translation in English with it—" *behold a young woman is with child and beareth a son.*" The expression, says he, is in the present tense. This translation agrees with the other circumstances

reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem, but he did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord.—Ver. 5, Wherefore the Lord his God delivered him into the hand of the king of Syria, and they smote him, and carried away a great multitude of them captive and brought them to Damascus, and he was also delivered into the hand of the king of Israel, who smote him with a great slaughter.

Ver. 6. "And Pekah (king of Israel) slew in Judah an hundred and twenty thousand in one day.—Ver. 8. And the children of Israel carried away captive of their brethren two hundred thousand, women, sons and daughters.

related of the birth of this child which was to be a sign to Ahaz. But as the true translation could not have been imposed upon the world as a prophecy of a child to be born seven hundred years afterwards, the Christian translators have falsified the original; and instead of making Isaiah to say, behold a *young woman* is with child and *beareth* a son, they make him to say, Behold a *virgin shall conceive and bear* a son. It is, however, only necessary for a person to read the 7th and 8th chapters of Isaiah, and he will be convinced that the passage in question is no prophecy of the person called Jesus Christ. I pass on to the second passage quoted from the Old Testament by the New, as a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

“Matthew, chap. 2. ver. 1. “Now when Jesus was born in “Bethlehem of Judah in the days of Herod the king, behold there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,—saying, where is he that is born king of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod, the king, heard these things he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him,—and when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born—and they said unto him in Bethlehem, in the land of Judea; for thus it is written by the prophet—and *thou Bethlehem, in the land of Judea art not the least among the princes of Judah, for out of thee shall come a Governor that shall rule my people Israel.*” This passage is in Micah, chap. 5. ver. 2.

“I pass over the absurdity of seeing and following a star in the day time as a man would a *will with the wisp*, or a candle and lanthorn at night: and also that of seeing it in the east, when themselves came from the east, for could such a thing be seen at all to serve them for a guide, it must be in the west to them. I confine myself solely to the passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

“The book of Micah, in the passage above quoted, chap. 5. ver. 2, is speaking of some person, without mentioning his name, from whom some great achievements were expected; but the description he gives of this person at the 5th ver. proves evidently that it is not Jesus Christ, for, he says, at the 5th verse, “And *this man* shall be the peace when the Assyrian shall come into our land, and when he shall tread in our palaces, then shall we raise up against him (that is, against the Assyrian) seven shepherds and eight principal men.—Ver. 6. And they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of Nimrod on the entrance thereof; thus shall *He* (the person spoken of at the head of the second verse) deliver us from the Assyrian when he cometh into our land, and when he treadeth within our borders.”

“This is so evidently descriptive of a military chief, that it cannot be applied to Christ, without outraging the character they pretend to give us of him. Besides which, the circumstances of the times here spoken of, and those of the times in which Christ is said to have lived, are in contradiction to each other. It was the Romans, and

not the Assyrians, that had conquered and *were in the land of Judea, and trod in their palaces* when Christ was born, and when he died, and so far from his driving them out, it was they who signed the warrant for his execution, and he suffered under it.

“ Having thus shewn that this is no prophecy of Jesus Christ, I pass on to the third passage quoted from the Old Testament by the New, as a prophecy of him.

“ This, like the first I have spoken of, is introduced by a dream. Joseph dreameth another dream, and dreameth that he seeth another angel. The account begins at the 13th ver. of the 2d chap. of Matthew.

“ The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: For Herod will seek the life of the young child to destroy him.—When he arose he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt—and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, *Out of Egypt have I called my son.*”

“ This passage is in the book of Hosea, chap. xi. ver. 1. The words are, “ When Israel was a child, then I loved him and *called my son out of Egypt*—As they called them, so they went from them, they sacrificed unto Baalim and burnt incense to graven images.”

“ This passage, falsely called a prophecy of Christ, refers to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh, and to the idolatry they committed afterwards. To make it apply to Jesus Christ, he then must be the person who *sacrificed unto Baalim and burnt incense to graven images*; for the persons called out of Egypt by the collective name, Israel, and the persons committing this idolatry, are the same persons, or the descendants of them. This then can be no prophecy of Jesus Christ unless they are willing to make an idolator of him. I pass on to the fourth passage called a prophecy by the writer of the book of Matthew.

“ This is introduced by a story told by nobody but himself, and scarcely believed by any body, of the slaughter of all the children under two years old, by the command of Herod. A thing, which it is not probable could be done by Herod, as he only held an office under the Roman government, to which appeals could always be had, as we see in the case of Paul.

“ Matthew, however, having made or told his story, says, chap. ii. ver. 17.—“ Then was fulfilled that which was spoken, by Jeremy the prophet, saying—*In Ramah was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and would not be comforted, because they were not.*”

“ This passage is in Jeremiah, chap. xxxi. ver. 15, and this verse, when separated from the verses before and after it, and which explains its application, might with equal propriety be applied to

every case of wars, sieges, and other violences, such as the Christians themselves have often done to the Jews, where mothers have lamented the loss of their children. There is nothing in the verse, taken singly, that designates, or points out, any particular application of it, otherwise than that it points to some circumstance, which, at the time of writing it, had already happened, and not to a thing yet to happen, for the verse is in the preter or past tense.—I go to explain the case and shew the application of the verse.

“Jeremiah lived in the time that Nebuchadnezzar besieged, took, plundered, and destroyed Jerusalem, and led the Jews captive to Babylon. He carried his violence against the Jews to every extreme. He slew the sons of king Zedekiah, before his face, he then put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and kept him in prison till the day of his death.

“It is of this time of sorrow and suffering to the Jews that Jeremiah is speaking. Their Temple was destroyed, their land desolated, their nation and government entirely broken up, and themselves, men, women, and children, carried into captivity. They had too many sorrows of their own immediately before their eyes, to permit them, or any of their chiefs, to be employing themselves on things that might, or might not happen in the world seven hundred years afterwards.

“It is, as already observed of this time of sorrow and suffering to the Jews that Jeremiah is speaking in the verse in question. In the two next verses, the 16th and 17th, he endeavours to console the sufferers by giving them hopes, and according to the fashion of speaking in those days, assurances from the Lord, that their sufferings should have an end, and that *their children should return again to their own land*. But I leave the verses to speak for themselves, and the Old Testament to testify against the New.

“Jeremiah chap. xxxi. ver. 15.—“Thus saith the Lord, a voice *was* heard in Ramah (it is in the preter tense) lamentation and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted because they were not.

“Verse 16.—“Thus saith the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, *and THEY shall come again from the land of the enemy*.

“Verse 17.—“And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that *thy children shall come again to their own border*.”

“By what strange ignorance or imposition is it, that the children of which Jeremiah speaks (meaning the people of the Jewish nation, scripturally called *children of Israel*, and not mere infants under two years old) and who were to return again from the land of the enemy, and come again into their own borders, can mean the children that Matthew makes Herod to slaughter. Could those return again from the land of the enemy, or how can the land of the enemy be applied to them? Could they come again to their own borders? Good Heavens! How has the world been imposed upon by testament-makers,

priest-craft, and pretended prophecies. I pass on to the fifth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

“This, like two of the former, is introduced by a dream. Joseph dreameth another dream, and dreameth of another Angel. And Matthew is again the historian of the dream and the dreamer. If it were asked how Matthew could know what Joseph dreamed, neither the Bishop nor all the Church could answer the question. Perhaps it was Matthew that dreamed and not Joseph; that is, Joseph dreamed by proxy in Matthew’s brain, as they tell us Daniel dreamed for Nebuchadnezzar.—But be this as it may I go on with my subject.

“The account of this dream is in Matthew, chap. ii. ver. 19: “But when Herod was dead, behold an Angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt—Saying, arise and take the young child and his mother and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child’s life—and he arose and took the young child and his mother and came into the land of Israel—But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither. Notwithstanding being warned of God in a *dream* (here is another dream) he turned aside into the parts of Galilee—and he came and dwelt in a city called *Nazareth*, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets—*He shall be called a Nazarine.*”

“Here is good circumstantial evidence, that Matthew dreamed, for there is no such passage in all the Old Testament: and I invite the bishop and all the priests in Christendom, including those of America, to produce it. I pass on to the sixth passage called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

“This, as Swift says on another occasion, is *lugged in head and shoulders*, it needs only to be seen in order to be hooted, as a forced and far-fetched piece of imposition.

“Matthew, chap. 4. ver. 12. “Now when Jesus heard that “John was cast into prison he departed into Galilee—and leaving Nazareth he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the border of Zebulon and Nephthalim—That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying,—*The land of Zebulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the Gentiles—the people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is springing upon them.*”

“I wonder Matthew has not made the criss-cross-row, or the Christ-cross-row, (I know not how the priests spell it) into a prophecy. He might as well have done this, as cut out these unconnected and undescriptive sentences from the place they stand in and dubbed them with that title.

“The words, however, are in Isaiah, chap. ix. ver. 1, 2, as follows:

“Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation when at the first he lightly afflicted *the land of Zebulon, and*

the land of Nephtali, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations."

"All this relates to two circumstances that had already happened at the time these words in Isaiah were written. The one where the land of Zebulon and of Nephtali had been lightly afflicted, and afterwards more grievously by the way of the sea.

"But observe, reader, how Matthew has falsified the text. He begins his quotation at a part of the verse where there is not so much as a comma, and thereby cuts off every thing that relates to the first affliction. He then leaves out all that relates to the second affliction, and by this means leaves out every thing that makes the verse intelligible, and reduces it to a senseless skeleton of names of towns.

"To bring this imposition of Matthew clearly and immediately before the eye of the reader, I will repeat the verse, and put between crotchets [] the words he has left out, and put in *Italics* those he has preserved.

"[Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation when at the first he lightly afflicted] *the land of Zebulon and the land of Nephtali, [and did more grievously afflict her] by the way of the sea beyond Jordan in Galilee of the nations.*

"What gross imposition is it to gut, as the phrase is, a verse in this manner, render it perfectly senseless, and then puff it off on a credulous world as a prophecy. I proceed to the next verse.

"Verse 2. "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death upon them hath the light shined." All this is historical and not in the least prophetical. The whole is in the preter tense. It speaks of things that *had been accomplished* at the time the words were written, and not of things to be accomplished afterwards.

"As then the passage is in no possible sense prophetical, nor intended to be so, and that to attempt to make it so is not only to falsify the original, but to commit a criminal imposition, it is matter of no concern to us, otherwise than as curiosity, to know who the people were of which the passage speaks that sat in darkness, and what the light was that had shined in upon them.

"If we look into the preceding chapter, the 8th, of which the 9th is only a continuation, we shall find the writer speaking at the 19th verse of "*witches and wizards who peep about and mutter,*" and of people who made application to them; and he preaches and exhorts them against this darksome practice. It is of this people, and of this darksome practice, *walking in darkness* that he is speaking at the 2d verse of the 9th chapter; and with respect to *the light that had shined in upon them* it refers entirely to his own ministry, and to the boldness of it, which opposed itself to that of *the witches and wizards who peeped about and muttered.*

"Isaiah is upon the whole, a wild disorderly writer, preserving, in general, no clear chain of perception in the arrangement of his ideas,

and consequently producing no defined conclusions from them. It is the wildness of his style, the confusion of his ideas, and the ranting metaphors he employs, that have afforded so many opportunities to priest-craft in some cases, and to superstition in others, to impose those defects upon the world as prophecies of Jesus Christ. Finding no direct meaning in them, and not knowing what to make of them, and supposing, at the same time, they were intended to have a meaning, they supplied the defect by inventing a meaning of their own, and called it *his*. I have, however, in this place, done Isaiah the justice to rescue him from the claws of Matthew, who has torn him unmercifully to pieces, and from the imposition or ignorance of priests and commentators, by letting Isaiah speak for himself.

“If the words *walking in darkness*, and *light breaking in*, could, in any case, be applied prophetically, which they cannot be, they would better apply to the times we now live in, than to any other. The world has “*walked in darkness*” for eighteen hundred years, both as to religion and government, and it is only since the American Revolution began that light has broken in. The belief of *one God*, whose attributes are revealed to us in the book or scripture of the creation, which no human hand can counterfeit or falsify, and not in a written or printed book, which, as Matthew has shewn, can be altered or falsified by ignorance or design, is now making its way among us; and as to government, *the light is already gone forth*, and whilst men ought to be careful not to be blinded by the excess of it, as at a certain time in France, when every thing was Robespierian violence, they ought to reverence, and even to adore it, with all the firmness and perseverance that true wisdom can inspire.

“I pass on to the seventh passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

“Matthew, chap. viii. ver. 16. “When the evening was come, they brought unto him, (Jesus,) many that were possessed with devils, and he cast out the spirit with his word, and healed all that were sick.—That it might be fulfilled; which was spoken by Esaias, (Isaiah) the prophet saying, *himself took our infirmities, and bear our sickness.*”

“This affair of people being possessed by devils, and of casting them out, was the fable of the day, when the books of the New Testament were written. It had not existence at any other time. The books of the Old Testament mention no such thing; the people of the present day know of no such thing; nor does the history of any people or country speak of such a thing. It starts upon us all at once in the book of Matthew; and is altogether an invention of the New Testament-makers and the Christian church. The book of Matthew is the first book where the word *Devil* is mentioned*. We read in some of the books of the Old Testament, of things called familiar spirits, the supposed companions of people called witches and wizards. It was no other than the trick of pretended conjurors to obtain money

* The word *devil* is a personification of the word *evil*.

from credulous and ignorant people ; or the fabricated charge of superstitious malignancy against unfortunate and decrepid old age.

“ But the idea of a familiar spirit, if we can affix any idea to the term, is exceedingly different to that of being possessed by a devil. In the one case the supposed familiar spirit is a dexterous agent, that comes and goes and does as he is bidden : in the other, he is a turbulent roaring monster, that tears and tortures the body into convulsions. Reader, whoever thou art, put thy trust in thy Creator, make use of the reason he endowed thee with, and cast from thee all such fables.

“ The passage alluded to by Matthew, for as a quotation it is false, is in Isaiah, chap. liii. ver. 4, which is as follows :

“ Surely *he* (the person of whom Isaiah is speaking of,) *hath borne* our griefs and carried our sorrows.” It is in the preter tense.

“ Here is nothing about casting out devils, nor curing of sicknesses. The passage, therefore, so far from being a prophecy of Christ, is not even applicable as a circumstance.

“ Isaiah, or at least the writer of the book that bears his name, employs the whole of this chapter, the 53d, in lamenting the sufferings of some deceased person of whom he speaks very pathetically. It is a monody on the death of a friend ; but he mentions not the name of the person, nor gives any circumstance of him by which he can be personally known ; and it is this silence, which is evidence of nothing, Matthew has laid hold of, to put the name of Christ to it ; as if the chiefs of the Jews, whose sorrows were then great, and the times they lived in big with danger, were never thinking about their own affairs, nor the fate of their own friends, but were continually running a wild-goose chase into futurity.

“ To make a monody into a prophecy is an absurdity. The characters and circumstances of men, even in different ages of the world are so much alike, that what is said of one, may with propriety be said of many ; but this fitness does not make the passage into a prophecy ; and none but an impostor, or a bigot, would call it so.

“ Isaiah, in deploring the hard fate and loss of his friend, mentions nothing of him but what the human lot of man is subject to. All the cases he states of him, his persecutions, his imprisonment, his patience in suffering, and his perseverance in principle, are all within the line of nature ; they belong exclusively to none, and may with justness be said of many. But if Jesus Christ was the person the church represents him to be, that which would exclusively apply to him, must be something that could not apply to any other person : something beyond the line of nature : something beyond the lot of mortal man ; and there are no such expressions in this chapter, nor any other chapter in the Old Testament.

“ It is no exclusive description to say of a person, as is said of the person Isaiah is lamenting in this chapter. “ *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, he is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers, is dumb,*

so he opened not his mouth." This may be said of thousands of persons, who have suffered oppression and unjust death with patience, silence, and perfect resignation.

"Grotius, whom the bishop esteems a most learned man, and who certainly was so, supposes that the person of whom Isaiah is speaking, is Jeremiah. Grotius is led into this opinion, from the agreement there is between the description given by Isaiah, and the case of Jeremiah, as stated in the book that bears his name. If Jeremiah was an innocent man, and not a traitor in the interest of Nebuchadnezzar, when Jerusalem was besieged, his case was hard: he was accused by his countrymen, was persecuted, oppressed, and imprisoned, and he says of himself, see Jeremiah, chap. ii. ver. 19. "*But as for me, I was like a lamb or an ox that is brought to the slaughter.*"

"I should be inclined to the same opinion with Grotius, had Isaiah lived at the time when Jeremiah underwent the cruelties of which he speaks; but Isaiah died about fifty years before; and it is of a person of his own time, whose case Isaiah is lamenting in the chapter in question, and which, imposition and bigotry, more than seven hundred years afterwards, perverted into a prophecy of a person they call Jesus Christ.

"I pass on to the eighth passage called a prophecy of Jesus-Christ.

"Matthew, chap. xii. ver. 14. "Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him, how they might destroy him—But when Jesus knew it he withdrew himself: and great numbers followed him and he healed them all—and he charged them they should not make him known: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias (Isaiah) the prophet, saying,

"Behold my servant whom I have chosen; my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased, I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles—he shall not strive nor cry, neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets—a bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory—and in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

"In the first place this passage hath not the least relation to the purpose for which it is quoted.

"Matthew says, that the Pharisees held a council against Jesus to destroy him—that Jesus withdrew himself—that great numbers followed him—that he healed them—and that he charged them they should not make him known.

"But the passage Matthew has quoted as being fulfilled by these circumstances, does not so much as apply to any one of them. It has nothing to do with the Pharisees holding a council to destroy Jesus—with his withdrawing himself—with great numbers following him—with his healing them—nor with his charging them not to make him known.

"The purpose for which the passage is quoted, and the passage itself, are as remote from each other, as nothing from something. But

the case is, that people have been so long in the habit of reading the books called the Bible and Testament with their eyes shut, and their senses locked up, that the most stupid inconsistencies have passed on them for truth, and imposition for prophecy. The all wise Creator hath been dishonoured by being made the author of fable, and the human mind degraded by believing it.

“In this passage, as in that last mentioned, the name of the person of whom the passage speaks, is not given, and we are left in the dark respecting him. It is this defect in the history, that bigotry and imposition have laid hold of, to call it prophecy.

“Had Isaiah lived in the time of Cyrus, the passage would descriptively apply to him. As king of Persia, his authority was great among the Gentiles, and it is of such a character the passage speaks, and his friendship to the Jews whom he liberated from captivity, and who might then be compared to a *bruised reed*, was extensive. But this description does not apply to Jesus Christ, who had no authority among the Gentiles; and as to his own countrymen, figuratively described by the bruised reed, it was they who crucified him. Neither can it be said of him that he did not cry, and that his voice was not heard in the street. As a preacher it was his business to be heard, and we are told that he travelled about the country for that purpose. Matthew has given a long sermon, which, (if his authority is good, but which is much to be doubted, since he imposes so much,) Jesus preached to a multitude upon a mountain, and it would be a quibble to say that a mountain is not a street, since it is a place equally as public.

“The last verse in the passage (the 4th) as it stands in Isaiah, and which Matthew has not quoted, says, “He shall not fail nor be discouraged till he have set judgment in the Earth, and the Isles shall wait for his law.” This also applies to Cyrus. He was not discouraged, he did not fail, he conquered all Babylon, liberated the Jews, and established laws. But this cannot be said of Jesus Christ, who in the passage before us, according to Matthew, withdrew, himself for fear of the Pharisees, and charged the people that followed him not to make it known where he was; and who, according to other parts of the Testament, was continually moving from place to place to avoid being apprehended*.

* In the second part of the *Age of Reason*, I have shewn that the book ascribed to Isaiah is not only miscellaneous as to matter but as to authorship; that there are parts in it which could not be written by Isaiah, because they speak of things one hundred and fifty years after he was dead. The instance I have given of this, in that work, corresponds with the subject I am upon, at least a little better than Matthew's introduction and his quotation.

“Isaiah lived, the latter part of his life, in the time of Hezekiah, and it was about one hundred and fifty years from the death of Hezekiah to the first year of the reign of Cyrus, when Cyrus published a proclamation, which is given in the first chapter of the book of Ezra, for the return of the Jews to Jerusalem. It

"But it is immaterial to us, at this distance of time, to know who the person was; it is sufficient to the purpose I am upon, that of detecting fraud and falsehood, to know who it was not, and to shew it was not the person called Jesus Christ.

"I pass on to the ninth passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

"Matthew, chap. xxi. ver. 1. and when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two of his disciples, saying unto them, go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her, loose them and bring them unto me,—and if a nymán say aught to you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them, and straightway he will send them.

"All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet saying, *Tell ye the daughter of Sion, behold thy king cometh unto the meek, and setting on an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.*"

"Poor ass! let it be some consolation amidst all thy sufferings, that if the heathen world erected a bear into a constellation, the Christian world has elevated thee into a prophecy.

"This passage is in Zechariah, chap. ix. ver. 9. and is one of the whims of friend Zechariah to congratulate his countrymen who were then returning from captivity in Babylon, and himself with them, to Jerusalem. It has no concern with any other subject. It is strange that apostles, priests and commentators, never permit, or never suppose, the Jews to be speaking of their own affairs. Every thing in

cannot be doubted, at least it ought not to be doubted, that the Jews would feel an affectionate gratitude for this act of benevolent justice, and it is natural they would express that gratitude in the customary style, bombastical and hyperbolical as it was, which they used on extraordinary occasions, and which was, and still is in practice with all the eastern nations.

The instance to which I refer, and which is given in the second part of the Age of Reason, is the last verse of the 44th chapter and the beginning of the 45th—in these words: "*That saith of Cyrus he is my shepherd and shall perform all my pleasures: even saying to Jerusalem thou shalt be built, and to the Temple thy foundation shall be laid. Thus saith the Lord to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates and the gates shall not be shut.*"

This complimentary address is in the present tense, which shews that the things of which it speaks were in existence at the time of writing it; and consequently, that the author must have been at least one hundred and fifty years later than Isaiah, and that the book which bears his name is a compilation. The proverbs called Solomon's, and the Psalms called David's, are of the same kind. The two last verses of the second book of Chronicles, and the three first verses of the first chapter of Ezra, are word for word the same; which shew that the compilers of the Bible mixed the writings of different authors together, and put them under some common head.

As we have here an instance in the 44th and 45th chapters of the introduction of the name of Cyrus into a book to which it cannot belong, it affords good ground to conclude, that the passage in the 42d chapter, in which the character of Cyrus is given without his name, has been introduced in like manner, and that the person there spoken of is Cyrus.

the Jewish books is perverted and distorted into meanings never intended by the writers. Even the poor ass must not be a Jew-ass but a Christian-ass. I wonder they did not make an apostle of him, or a bishop, or at least make him speak and prophecy. He could have lifted up his voice as loud as any of them.

“Zechariah, in the first chapter of his book, indulges himself in several whims on the joy of getting back to Jerusalem. He says at the 8th verse, “I saw by night (Zechariah was a sharp-sighted seer) and behold a man sitting on a *red horse*, (yes, reader, a *red horse*) and he stood among the myrtle trees that were in the bottom, and behind him were *red horses speckled and white*,” He says nothing about green horses, nor blue horses, perhaps because it is difficult to distinguish green from blue by night, but a Christian can have no doubt they were there, because “*faith is the evidence of things not seen*.”

“Zechariah then introduces an angel among his horses, but he does not tell us what colour the angel was of, whether black or white nor whether he came to buy horses, or only to look at them as curiosities, for certainly they were of that kind. Be this however as it may, he enters into conversation with this angel on the joyful affair of getting back to Jerusalem, and he saith at the 16th verse, “*Therefore, thus saith the Lord, I AM RETURNED to Jerusalem with mercies; my house shall be built in it, saith the Lord of hosts, and a line shall be stretched forth upon Jerusalem*.” An expression signifying the rebuilding the city,

“All this, whimsical and imaginary as it is, sufficiently proves that it was the entry of the Jews into Jerusalem from captivity, and not the entry of Jesus Christ seven hundred years afterwards, that is the subject upon which Zechariah is always speaking.

“As to the expression of riding upon an ass, which commentators represent as a sign of humility in Jesus Christ, the case is, he never was so well mounted before. The asses of those countries are large and well-proportioned, and were anciently the chief of riding animals. Their beasts of burden, and which served also for the conveyance of the poor, were camels and dromedaries. We read in Judges, chap. x. ver. 4, that “Jair (one of the Judges of Israel) had thirty sons that *rode on thirty ass-colts*, and they had thirty cities.” But commentators distort every thing.

“There is besides very reasonable grounds to conclude that this story of Jesus riding publicly into Jerusalem, accompanied, as it is said at the 8th and 9th verses, by a great multitude, shouting and rejoicing and spreading their garments by the way, is altogether a story destitute of truth.

“In the last passage called a prophecy that I examined, Jesus is represented as withdrawing, that is, running away, and concealing himself for fear of being apprehended, and charging the people that were with him not to make him known. No new circumstances had arisen in the interim to change his condition for the better; yet here

he is represented as making his public entry into the same city, from which he had fled for safety. The two cases contradict each other so much, that if both are not false, one of them at least can scarcely be true. For my own part, I do not believe there is one word of historical truth in the whole book. I look upon it at best to be a romance; the principal personage of which is an imaginary or allegorical character, founded upon some tale, and in which the moral is in many parts good, and the narrative part very badly and blunderingly written.

"I pass on to the tenth passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

"Matthew, chap. xxvi. ver. 51. "And behold one of them which was with Jesus (meaning Peter) stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and, struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword—Thinks thou that I cannot now pray to my father and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels. But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled that thus it must be—In that same hour Jesus said to the multitudes are ye come out as against a thief with swords and with staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."

"This loose and general manner of speaking admits neither of detection nor of proof. Here is no quotation given, nor the name of any Bible author mentioned, to which reference can be had.

"There are, however, some high improbabilities against the truth of the account.

"First—It is not probable that the Jews who were then a conquered people, and under subjection to the Romans, should be permitted to wear swords.

"Secondly—If Peter had attacked the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear, he would have been immediately taken up by the guard that took up his master and sent to prison with him.

"Thirdly—What sort of disciples and preaching apostles must those of Christ have been that wore swords?

"Fourthly—This scene is represented to have taken place the same evening of what is called the Lord's supper, which makes, according to the ceremony of it, the inconsistency of wearing swords the greater.

"I pass on to the eleventh passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

"Matthew, chap. xxvii. ver. 3. "Then Judas which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, what is that to us, see thou to that. And he cast down the pieces of silver and departed and went and hanged

himself—And the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, it is not lawful to put them in the treasury because it is the price of blood—And they took counsel and bought with them the potters' field to bury strangers in, Wherefore that field is called the field of blood unto this day. Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, and they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value, and gave them for the potters' field as the Lord appointed me."

"This is a most bare-faced piece of imposition. The passage in Jeremiah which speaks of the purchase of a field, has no more to do with the case to which Matthew applies it, than it has to do with the purchase of lands in America. I will recite the whole passage.

"Jeremiah, chap. 32, ver. 6. "And Jeremiah said, the word of the Lord came unto me saying—Behold Hanameil, the son of Shalum thine uncle, shall come unto thee, saying, buy thee my field that is in Anathoth, for the right of redemption is thine to buy it—So Hanameil mine uncle's son came to me in the court of the prison, according to the word of the Lord, and said unto me, buy my field I pray thee that is in Anathoth, which is in the country of Benjamin, for the right of inheritance is thine, and the redemption is thine; buy it for thyself. Then I knew this was the word of the Lord—And I bought the field of Hanameil mine uncle's son that was in Anathoth, and weighed him the money even seventeen shekels of silver—and I subscribed the evidence and sealed it; and took witnesses and weighed him the money in balances. So I took the evidence of the purchase, both that which was sealed according to the law and custom, and that which was open—and I gave the evidence of the purchase unto Baruch, the son of Neriah, the son of Maaseith, in the sight of Hanameil mine uncle's son, and in the presence of the witnesses that subscribed, before all the Jews that sat in the court of the prison—and I charged Baruch before them, saying, Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open, and put them in an earthen vessel that they may continue many days—for thus saith the Lord of hosts the God of Israel, houses and fields, and vineyards, shall be possessed again in this land."

"I forbear making any remark on this abominable imposition of Matthew. The thing glaringly speaks for itself. It is priests and commentators that I rather ought to censure for having preached falsehood so long, and kept people in darkness with respect to those impositions. I am not contending with these men upon points of doctrine, for I know that sophistry has always a city of refuge. I am speaking of facts; for wherever the thing called a fact is a falsehood, the faith founded upon it is delusion, and the doctrine raised upon it, not true. Ah, reader, put thy trust in thy Creator, and thou wilt be safe; but if thou trustest to the book called the

scriptures thou trustest to the rotten staff of fable and falsehood. But I return to my subject.

"There is among the whims and reveries of Zechariah, mention made of thirty pieces of silver given to a potter. They can hardly have been so stupid as to mistake a potter for a field; and if they had, the passage in Zechariah has no more to do with Jesus, Judas, and the field to bury strangers in, than that already quoted. I will recite the passage.

"Zechariah, chap. xi. ver. 7. "And I will feed the flock of slaughter, even you, O poor of the flock, and I took unto me two staves; the one I called *Beauty* and the other I called *Bands*, and I fed the flock—Three shepherds also I cut off in one month; and my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me.—Then said I, I will not feed you; that which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off, and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another.—And I took my staff, even *Beauty*, and cut it asunder that I might break my covenant which I had made with all the people.—And it was broken in that day; and so the poor of the flock who waited upon me knew that it was the word of the Lord.

"And I said unto them, if ye think good give me my price, and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price *thirty pieces of silver*, And the Lord said unto me, cast it unto the *potter*; a goodly price that I was prized at of them; and I took the thirty pieces of silver and cast them to the potter in the house of the Lord.

"When I cut asunder mine other staff, even *Bands*, that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.*"

* "Whiston, in his Essay on the Old Testament says, that the passage of Zechariah, of which I have spoken was in the copies of the Bible of the first century, in the book of Jeremiah, from whence says he, it was taken and inserted without coherence, in that of Zechariah—well, let it be so, it does not make the case a wit the better for the New Testament; but it makes the case a great deal the worse for the Old. Because it shews, as I have mentioned respecting some passages in a book ascribed to Isaiah, that the works of different authors have been so mixed and confounded together they cannot now be discriminated, except where they are historical, chronological, or biographical, as in the interpolation in Isaiah. It is the name of Cyrus inserted where it could not be inserted, as he was not in existence till one hundred and fifty years after the time of Isaiah that detects the interpolation and the blunder with it.

"Whiston was a man of great literary learning, and what is of much higher degree, of deep scientific learning. He was one of the best and most celebrated mathematicians of his time, for which he was made professor of mathematics of the university of Cambridge. He wrote so much in defence of the Old Testament, and of what he calls prophecies of Jesus Christ, that at last he began to suspect the truth of the scriptures and wrote against them; for it is only those who examine them see the imposition. Those who believe them most are those who know least about them.

"Whiston after writing so much in defence of the scriptures was at last prosecuted for writing against them. It was this that gave occasion to Swift in his ludicrous epigram on Ditton and Whiston, each of which set up to find out the longitude, to call the one *good master Ditton*, and the other *wicked Will Whiston*. But

Gentlemen of the Jury—Whilst on this subject about Whiston, I cannot fail to relate an anecdote concerning him, which is a case in point for my defence.

Whiston was persecuted by his fellow collegians, and by the clergy in general of his day, for wishing to restore something he called primitive Christianity, or to abolish the corruptions of what was then called Christianity. He was a great favourite with Caroline, the Queen Consort of George the First. One day when walking in Hampton Court Gardens with her, she observed, "Mr. Whiston, whatever might be your peculiar opinions, whether they be right or wrong, would it not be better for you to keep them to yourself, and not expose yourself thus to persecution?" Whiston surprized, looked stedfastly on the Queen, and asked: "Can your Majesty be really in earnest as to what you say?" "Yes" she replied. Then answered Whiston, "Where would your protestant Majesty have been now if Luther and Calvin had held their tongues?" The Queen's smiling silence shewed her acquiescence in the justness of the remark, the subject dropped, but she ever after used her influence to stay the rage of the prosecutions against him.*

"There is no making either head or tail of this incoherent gibberish. His two staves, one called *Beauty*, and the other *Bands*, is so much like a fairy tale, that I doubt if it had any higher origin. There is, however, no part that has the least relation to the case stated in Matthew; on the contrary, it is the reverse of it. Here the *thirty pieces* of silver, whatever it was for, is called a *goodly price*, it was as much as the thing was worth, and according to the

as Swift was a great associate with the Free-thinkers of those days, such as Boliogbroke, Pope, and others, who did not believe the books called the scriptures, there is no certainty whether he wittily called him *wicked* for defending the scriptures, or for writing against them. The known character of Swift decides for the former.

* Another anecdote of Whiston is worthy of being introduced here although not used on the trial. It must be considered a note by the editor. Whiston was one day in company with the Lord Chief Justice King, and the subject of his discourse naturally turning to the persecutions of the former, the Chief Justice observed, Mr. Whiston you should not expose yourself so obstinately to these persecutions, you should temporize a little to calm them. Whiston answered, my Lord, when you examine a witness upon any thing in the court, what would you do with one who temporized or stated what he did not believe or knew? we should send him to gaol for perjury or prevarication answered the Chief Justice. Well then, suppose God Almighty in the next world should be as rigid in exacting justice as the Lord Chief Justice is in this; What then? The Chief Justice could make no answer, and when Whiston told the anecdote to the Queen, she observed "Very right, Mr. Whiston, he could make you no answer."

language of the day, was approved of by the Lord, and the money given to the potter in the house of the Lord. In the case of Jesus and Judas, as stated in Matthew, the thirty pieces of silver were the price of blood; the transaction was condemned by the Lord, and the money when refunded was refused admittance into the treasury. Every thing in the two cases is the reverse of each other.

"Besides this, a very different and direct contrary account to that of Matthew is given of the affair of Judas, in the book called the *Acts of the Apostles*: according to that book the case, that so far from Judas repenting, and returning the money, and the high priest buying a field with it to bury strangers in, Judas kept the money and bought a field with it for himself; and instead of hanging himself as Matthew says, that he fell headlong and burst asunder, some Commentators endeavour to get over one part of the contradiction by ridiculously supposing that Judas hanged himself first and the rope broke.

"Acts, chap. i. ver. 16. "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. (David says not a word about Judas) ver. 17, for he (Judas) was numbered among us and obtained part of our ministry.

"Ver. 18. *Now this man purchased a field with the reward of iniquity and falling headlong burst asunder in the midst, and his bowels gushed out.*" Is it not a species of blasphemy to call the New Testament *revealed religion*, when we see in it such contradictions and absurdities.

"I pass on to the twelfth passage, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

"Matthew, chap. xxvii. ver. 35. "And they crucified him and parted his garments casting lots; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, "*They parted my garments among them and upon my vesture did they cast lots.*" This expression is in the 22d Psalm, ver. 18. The writer of that Psalm, (whoever he was, for the Psalms are a collection and not the work of one man) is speaking of himself and of his own case and not of that of another. He begins this Psalm with the words which the New Testament writers ascribed to Jesus Christ. "*My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me*"—words which might be uttered by a complaining man without any great impropriety, but very improperly from the mouth of a reputed God.

"The picture which the writer draws of his own situation in this Psalm, is gloomy enough. He is not prophecying, but complaining of his own hard case. He represents himself as surrounded by enemies and beset by persecutions of every kind; and by way of shewing the inveteracy of his persecutors, he says, at the 18th verse, *They part my garments among them and cast lots upon my vesture.* The expression is in the present tense; and is the same as to say, they

pursue me even to the clothes upon my back, and dispute how they shall divide them; besides, the word *vesture* does not always mean clothing of any kind, but *property*, or rather the admitting a man to, or *investing* him with property, and as it is used in this Psalm distinct from the word garment, it appears to be used in this sense. But Jesus had no property; for they make him say of himself, "*The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head.*"

"But be this as it may, if we permit ourselves to suppose the Almighty would condescend to tell, by what is called the spirit of prophecy, what would come to pass in some future age of the world, it is an injury to our own faculties, and to our ideas of his greatness, to imagine it would be about an old coat, or an old pair of breeches, or about any thing which the common accidents of life, or the quarrels that attend it, exhibit every day.

"That which is within the power of man to do, or in his will not to do, is not a subject for prophecy, even if there were such a thing, because it cannot carry with it any evidence of divine power, or divine interposition. The ways of God are not the ways of men. That which an almighty power performs, or wills, is not within the circle of human power to do, or to controul. But any executioner and his assistants might quarrel about dividing the garments of a sufferer, or divide them without quarrelling, and by that means fulfil the thing called a prophecy, or set it aside.

"In the passages before examined, I have exposed the falsehood of them. In this I exhibit its degrading meanness, as an insult to the Creator, and an injury to human reason.

"Here end the passages called prophecies by Matthew.

"Matthew concludes his book by saying, that when Christ expired on the cross, the rocks rent the graves opened, and the bodies of many of the saints arose; and Mark says, there was darkness over the land from the sixth hour until the ninth. They produce no prophecy for this. But had these things been facts, they would have been a proper subject for prophecy, because none but an almighty power could have inspired a fore-knowledge of them, and afterwards fulfilled them. Since, then, there is no such prophecy, but a pretended prophecy of an old coat, the proper deduction is, there were no such things, and that the book of Matthew is fable and falsehood.

"I pass on to the book called the Gospel according to St. Mark.

THE BOOK OF MARK.

"THERE are but few passages in Mark called prophecies and but few in Luke and John. Such as they are I shall examine, and also such other passages as interfere with those cited by Matthew.

“Mark begins his book by a passage which he puts in the shape of a prophecy. Mark, chap. i. ver. 1.—“The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the son of God—As it is written in the prophets, *Behold I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee.*” Malachi, chap. iii. ver. 1. The passage in the original is in the first person. Mark makes this passage to be a prophecy of John the Baptist, said, by the Church, to be a forerunner of Jesus Christ. But if we attend to the verses that follow this expression, as it stands in Malachi, and to the first and fifth verses of the next chapter, we shall see that this application of it is erroneous and false.

“Malachi having said at the first verse, “Behold I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me,” says at the second verse, *But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap.*”

“This description can have no reference to the birth of Jesus Christ, and consequently none to John the Baptist. It is a scene of fear and terror that is here described, and the birth of Christ is always spoken of as a time of joy and glad tidings.

“Malachi, continuing to speak on the same subject; explains in the next chapter what the scene is of which he speaks in the verses above quoted, and who the person is whom he calls the messenger.

“Behold, says he, chap. iv. ver. 1. “The day cometh that shall burn like an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble; and the day cometh that shall burn them up, saith the Lord of Hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.”

“Verse 5. “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”

“By what right, or by what imposition or ignorance, Mark has made Elijah into John the Baptist, and Malachi's description of the day of judgement into the birth day of Christ, I leave to the Bishop to settle.

“Mark, in the second and third verses of his first chapter, confounds two passages together taken from different books of the Old Testament. The second verse, “*Behold I send my messenger before thy face which shall prepare the way before thee,*” is taken, as I have before said, from Malachi, The third verse, which says, “*The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight,*” is not in Malachi, but in Isaiah, chap. xl. ver. 3. Whiston says, that both these verses were originally in Isaiah. If so, it is another instance of the disordered state of the Bible, and corroborates what I have said with respect to the name and description of Cyrus being in the book of Isaiah, to which it cannot chronologically belong.

“The words in Isaiah, chap xl. ver. 3. “*The voice of him that*

cryeth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord make his paths straight," are in the present tense, and, consequently, not predictive. It is one of those rhetorical figures which the Old Testament authors frequently used. That it is merely metaphorical may be seen at the 6th verse, "And the voice said cry, and he said what shall I cry? *All flesh is grass.*" This is evidently nothing but a figure, for flesh is not grass, otherwise than as a figure or metaphor, where one thing is put for another. Besides which the whole passage is too general and declamatory to be applied, exclusively, to any particular person or purpose.

"I pass on to the eleventh chapter.

"In this chapter Mark speaks of Christ riding into Jerusalem upon a colt, but he does not make it the accomplishment of a prophecy as Matthew has done, for he says nothing about a prophecy. Instead of which he goes on to the other tack, and in order to add new honours to the ass, he makes it to be a miracle; for he says, ver. 2, it was "*a colt whereon man never sat,*" signifying thereby, that as the ass had not been broken, he consequently was inspired into good manners, for we do not hear that he kicked Jesus Christ off. There is not a word about his kicking in all the four Evangelists.

"I pass on from these feats of horsemanship, performed upon a jack-ass, to the 15th chapter.

"At the 24th verse of this chapter, Mark speaks of *parting Christ's garments and casting lots upon them*, but he applies no prophecy to it, as Matthew does. He rather speaks of it as a thing then in practice with executioners as it is at this day.

"At the 28th verse of the same chapter, Mark speaks of Christ being crucified between two thieves, that says he "*the scriptures might be fulfilled which saith, and he was numbered with the transgressors.*" The same thing might be said of the thieves.

"This expression is in Isaiah, chap. liii. ver. 12—Grotius applies it to Jeremiah. But the case has happened so often in the world where innocent men have been numbered with transgressors, and is still continually happening, that it is absurdity to call it a prophecy of any particular person. All those whom the church calls martyrs were numbered with transgressors. All the honest patriots who fell upon the scaffold in France, in the time of Robespierre, were numbered with transgressors; and if himself had not fallen, the same case, according to a note in his own hand-writing, had befallen me, yet I suppose the Bishop will not allow that Isaiah was prophecying of Thomas Paine.

"These are all the passages in Mark which have any reference to prophecies.

"Mark concludes his book by making Jesus to say to his disciples, chap. xvi. ver. 15. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature—he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned, (fine Popish stuff this) and these signs shall follow them that believe; in my

name they shall cast out devils ; they shall speak with new tongues —they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them ; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.”

“ Now, the Bishop, in order to know if he has all this saving and wonder-working faith, should try those things upon himself. He should take a good dose of arsenic, and if he please, I will send him a rattle-snake from America ! as for myself, as I believe in God and not at all in Jesus Christ, nor in the books called the Scriptures, the experiment does not concern me.

“ I pass on to the book of Luke.

“ There are no passages in Luke called prophecies excepting those which relate to the passages I have already examined.

“ Luke speaks of Mary being espoused to Joseph, but he makes no references to the passage in Isaiah, as Matthew does. He speaks also of Jesus riding into Jerusalem upon a colt, but he says nothing about a prophecy. He speaks of John the Baptist, and refers to the passage in Isaiah of which I have already spoken.

“ At the 13th chapter, ver. 31, he says, “ *The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him (Jesus) get thee out and depart hence, for Herod will kill thee—and he said unto them, go ye, and tell that Fox, behold I cast out devils and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.*”

“ Matthew makes Herod to die whilst Christ was a child in Egypt, and makes Joseph to return with the child on the news of Herod's death, who had sought to kill him. Luke makes Herod to be living and to seek the life of Jesus after Jesus was thirty years of age ; for he says, chap. iii. ver. 23. “ And Jesus began to be about thirty years of age, being as was supposed, the son of Joseph.”

“ The obscurity in which the historical part of the New Testament is involved with respect to Herod, may afford to priests and commentators a plea, which to some may appear plausible, but to none satisfactory, that the Herod of which Matthew speaks, and the Herod of which Luke speaks, were different persons. Matthew calls Herod a king ; and Luke, chap. 3, ver. 1, calls Herod Tetrarch, (that is, Governor) of Galilee. But there could be no such person as a *king Herod*, because the Jews and their country were then under the dominion of the Roman Emperors who governed then by Tetrarchs or Governors.

“ Luke, chap 2, makes Jesus to be born when Cyrenius was governor of Syria, to which government Judea was annexed ; and according to this, Jesus was not born in the time of Herod. Luke says nothing about Herod seeking the life of Jesus when he was born ; nor of his destroying the children under two years old ; nor of Joseph fleeing with Jesus into Egypt ; nor of his returning from thence. On the contrary, the book of Luke speaks as if the person it calls Christ had never been out of Judea, and that Herod sought his life after he commenced preaching, as is before stated.

I have already shewn that Luke, in the book called the Acts of the Apostles, (which commentators ascribe to Luke) contradicts the account in Matthew, with respect to Judas and the thirty pieces of silver. Matthew says, that Judas returned the money, and that the high priests bought with it a field to bury strangers in, Luke says, that Judas kept the money and bought a field with it for himself.

“As it is impossible the wisdom of God should err, so it is impossible those books could have been written by divine inspiration. Our belief in God and his unerring wisdom forbids us to believe it. As for myself, I feel religiously happy in the total disbelief of it.

“There are no other passages called prophecies in Luke than those I have spoken of. I pass on to the book of John.

THE BOOK OF JOHN.

“JOHN, like Mark and Luke is not much of a prophecy-monger. He speaks of the ass, and the casting lots for Jesus’s clothes, and some other trifles, of which I have already spoken.

“John makes Jesus to say, chap. v. ver. 46. “*For had ye believed Moses ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me.*” The book of the Acts, in speaking of Jesus, says, chap. iii. ver. 22, “*For Moses truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethen, like unto me, him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you.*”

“This passage is in Deuteronomy, chap. xviii. ver. 15. They apply it as a prophecy of Jesus. What imposition! The person spoken of in Deuteronomy, and also in Numbers where the same person is also spoken of, is *Joshua*, the minister of Moses, and his immediate successor, and just such another Robespierrean character as Moses is represented to have been. The case as related in those books is as follows :

“Moses was grown old and near to his end, and in order to prevent confusion after his death, for the Israelites had no settled system of government ; it was thought best to nominate a successor to Moses while he was yet living. This was done, as we are told, in the following manner :

“Numbers, chap. xxvii. ver. 12. “And the Lord said unto Moses, get thee up into this mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given unto the children of Israel—and when thou hast seen it, thou also shall be gathered unto thy people as Aaron thy brother is gathered, ver. 15. And Moses spake unto the Lord, saying, Let the Lord, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation—Which may go out before them, and which may go in before them, and which may lead them out, and which may bring them in, that the congregation of the Lord be not as sheep that have no shepherd—And the Lord said unto Moses, take thee *Joshua*, the son of

Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him—and set him before Eleazar, the priest, and before all the congregation, and give him a charge in their sight—and thou shalt put some of thine honour upon him, and that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient—ver. 22, and Moses did as the Lord commanded, and he took Joshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation: and he laid hands upon him, and gave him charge as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.”

“I have nothing to do, in this place, with the truth, or the conjuration, here practised, of raising up a successor to Moses like unto himself. The passage sufficiently proves it is Joshua, and that it is an imposition in John, to make the case into a prophecy of Jesus. But the prophecy-mongers were so inspired with falsehood that they never speak truth.*

* “Newton, Bishop of Bristol in England, published a work in three volumes entitled “*Dissertations on the Prophecies*.” The work is tediously written and tiresome to read. He strains hard to make every passage into a prophecy that suits his purpose.—Among others, he makes this expression of Moses, “the Lord shall raise thee up a prophet like unto me,” into a prophecy of Christ, who was not born, according to the Bible chronologies till fifteen hundred and fifty-two years after the time of Moses, where as it was an immediate successor to Moses, whowas then near his end, that is spoken of in the passage above quoted.

“This Bishop, the better to impose this passage on the world as a prophecy of Christ, as entirely omitted the account in the book of Numbers which I have given at length word for word, and which shews beyond the possibility of a doubt, that the person spoken of by Moses is Joshua and no other person.

“Newton is but a superficial writer. He takes up things upon *hear-say* and inserts them without either examination or reflection, and the more extraordinary and incredible they are, the better he likes them.

“In speaking of the walls of Babylon, (volume the first, page 263) he makes a quotation from a traveller of the name of Tavernur, whom he calls (by way of giving credit to what he says) a *celebrated traveller*, that those walls were made of burnt brick, ten feet square and three feet thick.—If Newton had only thought of calculating the weight of such a brick, he would have seen the impossibility of their being used or even made. A brick ten feet square and three feet thick, contains 300 cubit feet, and allowing a cubit foot of brick to be only one hundred pounds, each of the Bishop’s bricks would weigh thirty thousand pounds; and it would take about thirty cart loads of clay (one horse carts) to make one brick.

“But his account of the stones used in the building of Solomon’s temple (volume 2d, page 211) far exceeds his bricks of ten foot square in the walls of Babylon: these are but brick-bats compared to them.

“The stones (says he) employed in the foundation, were in magnitude forty cubits, that is above sixty feet, a cubit, says he being somewhat more than one foot and a half, (a cubit is one foot nine inches) and the superstructure (says this Bishop) was worthy of such foundations. There were some stones, says he, of the whitest marble forty-five cubits long, five cubits high, and six cubits broad. These are the dimensions this Bishop has given, which in measure of twelve inches to a foot, is 78 feet 9 inches long 10 feet 6 inches thick, and contains 7,234 cubit feet. I now go to demonstrate the imposition of this Bishop.

“A cubit foot of water weighs sixty-two pounds and a half—The specific gravity of marble to water is as 2½ is to one. The weight therefore of a cubic

"I pass on to the last passage in these fables of the Evangelists, called a prophecy of Jesus Christ.

"John having spoken of Jesus expiring on the cross between two thieves, says, chap. xix. ver. 32. "Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first (meaning one of the thieves) and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs—ver. 36, for these things were done that the scripture should be fulfilled, *A bone of him shall not be broken.*

"The passage here referred to is in Exodus, and has no more to do with Jesus than with the ass he rode upon to Jerusalem; nor yet so much, if a roasted jack-ass, like a roasted he-goat might be eaten at a Jewish passover. It might be some consolation to an ass to know, that though his bones might be picked they would not be broken. I go to state the case.

"The book of Exodus in instituting the Jewish passover, in which they were to eat an he-lamb, or a he-goat, says, chap. xii. ver. 5, "Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it from the *sheep* or from the *goats.*"

"The book, after stating some ceremonies to be used in killing and dressing it (for it was to be roasted, not boiled) says, ver. 43. "And the Lord said unto Moses and Aaron, this is the ordinance of the passover. There shall no stranger eat thereof. But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. A foreigner shall not eat thereof. In

foot of marble is 156 pounds, which, multiplied by 7,234, the number of cubit feet in one of those stones makes the weight of it be 1,128,504 pounds, which is 503 tons. Allowing then a horse to draw about half a ton, it will require a thousand horses to draw one such stone on the ground; how then were they to be lifted into the building by human hands?

"The Bishop may talk of faith removing mountains, but all the faith of all the Bishops that ever lived could not remove one of those stones and their bodily strength given in.

"This Bishop also tells of *great guns* used by the Turks at the taking of Constantinople, one of which he says, was drawn by seventy yoke of oxen and by two thousand men. Volume 3d, page 117.

"The weight of a cannon that carries a ball of 48 pounds, which is the largest cannon that are cast, weighs 8,000 pounds, about three tons and a half, and may be drawn by three yoke of oxen. Any body may now calculate what the weight of the bishop's *great gun* must be that required seventy yoke of oxen to draw it. This bishop beats Gulliver.

"When men give up the use of the divine gift of reason in writing on any subject, be it religious or any thing else; there are no bounds to their extravagance, no limit to their absurdities.

"The three volumes which this bishop has written on what he calls the prophecies contain above one thousand two hundred pages, and he says in volume 3. page 117. "*I have studied brevity.*" This is as marvellous as the bishop's great gun.

one house shall it be eaten : thou shalt not carry forth aught of the flesh thereof abroad out of the house ; *Neither shalt thou break a bone thereof.*"

" We here see that the case as it stands in Exodus, is a ceremony and not a prophecy ; and totally unconnected with Jesus's bones or any part of him.

" John having thus filled up the measure of apostolic fable, concludes his book with something that beats all fable ; for he says at the last verse, " and there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, *I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written.*"

" This is what in vulgar life is called a *Thumper*, that is, not only a lie, but a lie beyond the line of possibility ; besides which, it is an absurdity, for if they should be written in the world, the world could contain them.—Here ends the examination of the passages called prophecies.

" I have now, reader, gone through and examined all the passages which the four books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, quote from the Old Testament, and call them prophecies of Jesus Christ. When I first set down to this examination, I expect to find cause for some censure, but little did I expect to find them so utterly destitute of truth, and of all pretensions to it, as I have shewn them to be.

" The practice which the writers of those books employ is not more false than it is absurd. They state some trifling case of the person they call Jesus Christ, and then cut out a sentence from some passage of the Old Testament and call it a prophecy of that case. But when the words thus cut out are restored to the place they are taken from, and read with the words before and after them, they give the lie to the New Testament. A short instance or two of this, will suffice for the whole.

" They make Joseph to dream of an angel who informs him that Herod is dead, and tells him to come with the child out of Egypt. They then cut out a sentence from the book of Hosea, *Out of Egypt have I called my Son*, and apply it as a prophecy in that case,

" The words, " *And called my son out of Egypt,*" are in the Bible. But what of that ? They are only part of a passage, and not a whole passage, and stand immediately connected with other words which shew they refer to the children of Israel coming out of Egypt in the time of Pharaoh, and to the idolatry they committed afterwards.

" Again they tell us that when the soldiers came to break the legs of the crucified persons, they found Jesus was already dead and

therefore did not break his. They then, with some alteration of the original, cut out a sentence from Exodus, *a bone of him shall not be broken*, and apply it as a prophecy of that case.

"The words, "*Neither shall ye break a bone thereof*," (for they have altered the text) are in the Bible. But what of that? They are, as in the former case only part of a passage, and not a whole passage, and when read with the words they are immediately joined to shew it is the bones of a he-lamb, or a he-goat of which the passage speaks.

"These repeated forgeries and falsifications create a well-founded suspicion, that all the cases spoken of concerning the person called Jesus Christ are *made cases*, on purpose to lug in, and that very clumsily, some broken sentences from the Old Testament, and apply them as prophecies of those cases; and that so far from his being the Son of God, he did not exist even as a man—that he is merely an imaginary or allegorical character, as Apollo, Hercules, Jupiter, and all the deities of antiquity were. There is no history written at the time Jesus Christ is said to have lived, that speaks of the existence of such a person even as a man.

"Did we find in any other book, pretending to give a system of religion, the falsehoods, falsifications, contradictions, and absurdities, which are to be met with in almost every page of the Old and New Testament, all the priests of the present day, who supposed themselves capable, would triumphantly shew their skill in criticism, and cry it down as a most glaring imposition. But since the books in question belong to their own trade and profession, they, or at least many of them, seek to stifle every inquiry into them, and abuse those who have the honesty and the courage to do it.

"When a book, as is the case with the Old and New Testament, is ushered into the world under the title of being the WORD OF GOD, it ought to be examined with the utmost strictness, in order to know if it has a well-founded claim to that title, or not, and whether we are, or are not, imposed upon; for as no poison is so dangerous as that which poisons the physic, so no falsehood is so fatal as that which is made an article of faith.

"This examination becomes more necessary, because when the New Testament was written, I might say invented, the art of printing was not known, and there were no other copies of the Old Testament than written copies. A written copy of that book would cost about as much as six hundred common printed Bibles now cost. Consequently, the book was in the hands but of very few persons, and those chiefly of the church. This gave an opportunity to the writers of the New Testament to make quotations from the Old Testament as they pleased, and call them prophecies with very little danger of being detected. Besides which, the terrors and inquisitorial fury of the church, like what they tell us of the flaming sword that turned every way, stood sentry over the New Testament; and time,

which brings every thing else to light, has served to thicken the darkness that guards it from detection.

“ Were the New Testament now to appear for the first time, every priest of the present day, would examine it line by line, and compare the detached sentences it calls prophecies, with the whole passages in the Old Testament, from whence they are taken. Why then do they not make the same examination, at this time as they would make, had the New Testament never appeared before ? If it be proper and right to make it in one case, it is equally proper and right to do it in the other case. Length of time can make no difference in the right to do it at any time. But instead of doing this, they go on as their predecessors went on before them, to tell the people there are prophecies of Jesus Christ, when the truth is there are none.

“ They tell us that Jesus rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. It is very easy to say so ; a great lie is as easily told as a little one. But if he had done so, those would have been the only circumstances respecting him, that would have differed from the common lot of man ; and consequently, the only case that would apply exclusively to him, as prophecy would be some passage in the Old Testament that foretold such things of him. But there is not a passage in the Old Testament that speaks of a person who after being crucified, dead, and buried, should rise from the dead and ascend into heaven. Our prophecy-mongers supply the silence, the Old Testament guards upon such things, by telling us of passages as they call prophecies, and that falsely so, about Joseph’s dreams, old clothes, broken bones, and such like trifling stuff.

“ In writing upon this, as upon every other subject, I speak a language full and intelligible. I deal not in hints and intimations. I have several reasons for this : First, that I may be clearly understood. Secondly, that it may be seen I am in earnest ; and Thirdly, because it is an affront to truth to treat falsehood with complaisance.

“ I will close this treatise with a subject I have already touched upon, in the first part of the Age of Reason.

“ The world has been amused with the term, *revealed religion*, and the generality of priests apply this term to the books called the Old and New Testament. The Mahometans apply the same term to the Koran. There is no man that believes in revealed religion stronger than I do ; but it is not the reveries of the Old and New Testament, nor of the Koran, that I dignify with that sacred title, That which is revelation to me exists in something which no human mind can invent ; no human hand can counterfeit or alter.

“ The word of God is the Creation we behold ; and this word of God revealeth to man all that is necessary for man to know of his Creator.

“ Do we want to contemplate his power ? we see it in the immensity of his creation.

“ Do we want to contemplate his wisdom? we see it in the unchangeable order by which the incomprehensible whole is governed.

“ Do we want to contemplate his munificence? we see it in the abundance with which he fills the earth.

“ Do we want to contemplate his mercy? we see it in his not withholding that abundance, even from the unthankful.

“ Do we want to contemplate his will so far as it respects man? The goodness he shews to all is a lesson for our conduct to each other.

“ In fine, do we want to know what God is? Search, not the book called the scripture, which any human hand might make, or any impostor invent; but the scripture called the Creation.

“ When, in the first part of the Age of Reason, I called the creation the true revelation of God to man, I did not know that any other person had expressed the same idea. But I lately met with the writings of Doctor Conyers Middleton, published the beginning of last century, in which he expresses himself in the same manner, with respect to the creation, as I have done in the Age of Reason.

“ He was principal librarian of the University of Cambridge, in England, which furnished him with extensive opportunities of reading, and necessarily required he should be well acquainted with the dead as well as the living languages. He was a man of a strong original mind; had the courage to think for himself, and the honesty to speak his thoughts.

“ He made a journey to Rome, from whence he wrote letters to shew that the forms and ceremonies of the Romish Christian Church were taken from the degenerate state of the heathen mythology, as it stood in the latter times of the Greeks and Romans. He attacked, without ceremony, the miracles which the church pretended to perform; and in one of his treatises he calls the *creation a revelation*. The priests of England, of that day, in order to defend their citadel, by first defending its out-works, attacked him for attacking the Roman ceremonies; and one of them censures him for calling the *creation a revelation*. He thus replies to him:

“ ‘ One of them,’ says he, ‘ appears to be scandalized by the title of *revelation*, which I have given to that discovery which God made of himself, in the visible works of his creation. Yet it is no other than what the wise, in all ages, have given to it; who consider it as the most authentic and indisputable revelation which God has ever given of himself, from the beginning of the world to this day. It was this by which the first notice of him was revealed to the inhabitants of the earth, and by which alone it has been kept up ever since, among the several nations of it. From this the reason of man was enabled to trace out his nature and attributes, and by a gradual deduction of consequences, to learn his own nature also, with all the duties belonging to it, which relate either to God, or to his fellow-creatures. This constitution of things was ordained by God, as

a universal law or rule of conduct to man ; the source of all his knowledge ; the test of all truth, by which all subsequent revelations which are *supposed* to have been given by God in any other manner, must be tried and cannot be received as divine, any further than as they are found to tally and coincide with this original standard.

“ ‘ It was this divine law, which I referred to in the passage above recited, (meaning the passage on which they had attacked him) being desirous to excite the reader’s attention to it, as it would enable him to judge more freely of the argument I was handling. For by contemplating this law he would discover the genuine way, which God himself has marked out to us, for the acquisition of true knowledge ; not from the authority or reports of our fellow creatures, but from the information of the fact, and material objects, which in his providential distribution of worldly things, he hath presented to the perpetual observation of our senses. For as it was from these that his existence and nature, the most important articles of all knowledge, were first discovered to man, so that grand discovery furnished new light, towards tracing out the rest, and made all the inferior subjects of human knowledge, more easily discoverable to us by the same method.

“ ‘ I had another view likewise in the same passages, and applicable to the same end, of giving the reader a more enlarged notion of the question in dispute, who, by turning his thoughts to reflect on the works of the Creator, as they are manifested to us in this fabric of the world, could not fail to observe, that they are all of them great, noble, and suitable to the majesty of his nature ; carrying with them the proofs of their origin, and shewing themselves to be the production of an all-wise and almighty being : and by accustoming his mind to these sublime reflections, he will be prepared to determine whether those miraculous interpositions so confidently affirmed to us by the primitive fathers, can reasonably be thought to make a part in the grand scheme of the Divine administration, or whether it be agreeable, that God who created all things by his will, and can give what turn to them he pleases by the same will, should, for the particular purposes of his government and the services of the church, *descend to the expedient of visions and revelations*, granted sometimes to boys for the instruction of the elders, and sometimes to women to settle the fashion and length of their veils, and sometimes to Pastors of the Church, to enjoin them to ordain one man a lecturer, another a priest ; or that he should scatter a profusion of miracles around the stake of a martyr, yet all of them vain and insignificant, and without any sensible effect either of preserving the life, or easing the sufferings of the saint, or even of mortifying his persecutors, who are always left to enjoy the full triumph of their cruelty, and the poor martyr to expire in a miserable death. When these things, I say, are brought to the original test, and compared with the genuine and indisputable works of the Creator ; how minute, how trifling, how contemptible must they be ? And how incredible must it be thought, that for the in-

struction of his Church, God should employ ministers so precarious, unsatisfactory, and inadequate, as the extacies of women and boys, and the visions of interested priests; which were derided at the very time by men of sense, to whom they were proposed.

“That this universal law, (continues Middleton, meaning the law revealed in the works of the creation) was actually revealed to the heathen world, long before the gospel was known, we learn from all the principle sages of antiquity who made it the capital subject of their studies and writings.

“*Cicero* (says Middleton) has given us a short abstract of it, in a fragment still remaining from one of his books on government, which (says Middleton) I shall here transcribe in his own words, as they will illustrate my sense also, in the passages that appear so dark and dangerous to my antagonist.

“The true law (it is *Cicero* who speaks) is right reason, conformable to the nature of things, constant, eternal, diffused through all, which calls us to duty by commanding; deters us from sin by forbidding; which never loses its influence with the good; nor ever preserves it with the wicked. This law cannot be over-ruled by any other, nor abrogated in the whole or in part; nor can we be absolved from it, either by the senate or by the people; nor are we to seek any other comment, or interpreter of it but itself: nor can there be one law at Rome, and another at Athens; one now and another hereafter; but the same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common master and governor of all—*GOD*. He is the inventor, propounder, enactor of this law; and whoever will not obey it, must first renounce himself, and throw off the nature of man, by doing which, he will suffer the greatest punishments though he should escape all the other torments which are commonly believed to be prepared for the wicked.’ Here ends the quotation from *Cicero*.

“Our Doctors, (continues Middleton) perhaps, will look on this as RANK DEISM; but let them call it what they will, I shall ever avow and defend it as the fundamental, essential and vital part of all true religion.’ Here ends the quotation from Middleton.

“I have here given the reader two sublime extracts from men who lived in ages of time, far remote from each other, but who thought alike. *Cicero* lived before the time in which they tell us Christ was born. Middleton may be called a man of our own time, as he lived within the same century with ourselves.

“In *Cicero* we see that vast superiority of mind, that sublimity of right reasoning, and justness of ideas, which man acquires, not by studying Bibles and Testaments, the theology of schools built thereon, but by studying the Creator in the immensity and unchangeable order of his creation, and the immutability of his law. ‘*There cannot,*’ says *Cicero*, ‘*be one law now, and another hereafter; but the same eternal immutable law comprehends all nations, at all times, under one common master and governor of all—GOD.*’ But according to

the doctrine of schools which priests have set up, we see one law called the *Old Testament*, given in one age of the world, and another law called the *New Testament* given in another age of the world. As all this is contradictory to the eternal immutable nature, and the unerring and unchangeable wisdom of God, we must be compelled to hold this doctrine to be false, and the old and the new law, called the Old and the New Testament, to be impositions, fables, and forgeries.

“In Middleton, we see the manly eloquence of an enlarged mind, and the genuine sentiments of a true believer in his Creator. Instead of reposing his faith on books, by whatever name they may be called, whether Old Testaments or New, he fixes the creation as the great original standard by which every other thing called the word or work of God, is to be tried. In this we have an indisputable scale whereby to measure every word or work imputed to him. If the thing so imputed carries not in itself the evidence of the same Almighty power, of the same unerring truth and wisdom, and the same unchangeable order in all its parts, as are visibly demonstrated to our senses, and comprehensible by our reason, in the magnificent fabric of the universe, that word or that work is not of God. Let then the two books called the Old and New Testament be tried by this rule, and the result will be, that the authors of them, who ever they were, will be convicted of forgery.

“The invariable principles, and unchangeable order, which regulate the movements of all the parts that compose the universe, demonstrate both to our senses and our reason that its creator is a God of unerring truth. But the Old Testament, beside the numberless absurd and bagatelle stories it tells of God, represents him as a God of deceit, a God not to be confided in. Ezekiel makes God to say, chap. 14. ver. 9. ‘and if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, *I the Lord have deceived that prophet.*’ And at the 20th chap. ver. 25, he makes God, in speaking of the children of Israel to say, ‘*Wherefore I gave them statutes that were not good, and judgments by which they could not live.*’ This, so far from being the word of God, is horrid blasphemy against him. Reader put thy confidence in thy God, and put no trust in the Bible.

“The same Old Testament, after telling us that God created the heavens and the earth in six days, makes the same almighty power and eternal wisdom employ itself in giving directions how a priest’s garments should be cut, and what sort of stuff they should be made of, and what their offerings should be, gold, and silver, and brass, and blue, and purple and scarlet, and fine linen, and goat’s hair, and rams’ skins dyed red, and badger skins, &c. chap. xxv. ver. 3, and in one of these pretended prophecies I have just examined, God is made to give directions how they should kill, cook, and eat a he-lamb or a he-goat. And Ezekiel, chap. iv. to fill up the measure of abominable absurdity, makes God to order him to take ‘*wheat and barley, and beans, and lentiles, and millet, and fitches, and*

make a loaf or a cake thereof, and bake it with human dung and eat it; but as Ezekiel complained that this mess was too strong for his stomach, the matter was compromised from man's dung to cow dung, Ezekiel, chap. iv. Compare all this ribaldry, blasphemously called the word of God, with the Almighty power that created the universe, and whose eternal wisdom directs and governs all its mighty movements, and we shall be at a loss to find a name sufficiently contemptible for it.

"In the promises which the Old Testament pretends that God made to his people, the same derogatory ideas of him prevail. It makes God to promise to Abraham, that his seed should be like the stars in heaven and the sand on the sea shore for multitude, and that he would give them the land of Canaan as their inheritance for ever. But observe, reader, how the performance of this promise was to begin, and then ask thine own reason, if the wisdom of God, whose power is equal to his will, could, consistently with that power and that wisdom, make such a promise.

"The performance of the promise was to begin, according to that book; by four hundred years of bondage and affliction. Genesis, chap. xv. ver. 13, *'And God said unto Abraham, know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them four hundred years.'* This promise then to Abraham, and his seed for ever, to inherit the land of Canaan, had it been a fact instead of a fable, was to operate, in the commencement of it, as a curse upon all the people and their children, and their children's children for four hundred years.

"But the case is, the book of Genesis was written after the bondage in Egypt had taken place; and in order to get rid of the disgrace of the Lord's chosen people, as they called themselves, being in bondage to the Gentiles, they make God to be the author of it, and annex it as a condition to a pretended promise; as if God, in making that promise, had exceeded his power in performing it, and consequently his wisdom in making it, and was obliged to compromise with them for one half, and with the Egyptians, to whom they were to be in bondage, for the other half.

"Without degrading my own reason by bringing those wretched and contemptible tales into a comparative view, with the Almighty power and eternal wisdom, which the Creator hath demonstrated to our senses in the creation of the universe, I will confine myself to say, that if we compare them with the divine and forcible sentiments of Cicero, the result will be, that the human mind has degenerated by believing them. Man, in a state of grovelling superstition, from which he has not courage to rise, loses the energy of his mental powers.

"I will not tire the reader with more observations on the Old Testament.

"As to the New Testament, if it be brought and tried by that standard which, as Middleton wisely says, God has revealed to our

senses, of his Almighty power and wisdom, in the creation and government of the visible universe, it will be found equally as false, paltry, and absurd, as the Old.

“ Without entering, in this place, into any other argument, that the story of Christ is of human invention and not of divine origin, I will confine myself to shew that it is derogatory to God, by the contrivance of it; because the means it supposes God to use, are not adequate to the end to be obtained; and, therefore, are derogatory to the Almightyness of his power, and the eternity of his wisdom.

“ The New Testament supposes that God sent his son upon earth to make a new covenant with man; which the church calls *the covenant of grace*, and to instruct mankind in a new doctrine, which it calls *Faith*, meaning thereby, not faith in God, for Cicero and all true Deists, always had, and always will have, this; but faith in the person called Jesus Christ, and that whoever had not this faith should to use the words of the New Testament, be DAMNED.

“ Now if this were a fact, it is consistent with that attribute of God, called his *Goodness*, that no time should be lost in letting poor unfortunate man know it; and as that goodness was united to Almighty power, and that power to Almighty wisdom, all the means existed in the hand of the Creator, to make it known immediately over the whole earth, in a manner suitable to the Almightyness of his divine nature, and with evidence that would not leave man in doubt; for it is always incumbent upon us, in all cases, to believe that the Almighty always acts, not by imperfect means as imperfect man acts, but consistently with his Almightyness. It is this only that can become the infallible criterion by which we can possibly distinguish the works of God from the works of man.

“ Observe now, Reader, how the comparison between this supposed mission of Christ, on the belief, or disbelief, of which they say, man was to be saved or damned—observe, I say, how the comparison between this and the Almighty power and wisdom of God demonstrated to our senses in the visible creation, goes on.

“ The Old Testament tells us, that God created the heavens and the earth, and every thing therein, in six days. The term *six days*, is ridiculous enough when applied to God; but leaving out that absurdity it contains the idea of Almighty power acting unitedly with Almighty wisdom, to produce an immense work, that of the creation of the universe, and every thing therein in a short time.

“ Now as the eternal salvation of man, is of much greater importance than his creation, and as that salvation depends, as the New Testament tells us, on man’s knowledge of, and belief in, the person called Jesus Christ, it necessarily follows from our belief in the goodness and justice of God, and our knowledge of his almighty power and wisdom, as demonstrated in the creation, that ALL THIS, if true, would be made known to all parts of the world, in as little time, at least, as was employed in making the world. To suppose the Almighty would pay greater regard and attention to the creation and

organization of inanimate matter, than he would to the salvation of innumerable millions of souls, which himself had created, '*as the image of himself*' is to offer an insult to his goodness and his justice.

"Now observe, reader, not the promulgation of this pretended salvation by a knowledge of, and a belief in, Jesus Christ went on, compared with the work of creation.

"In the first place, it took longer time to make the child than to make the world, for nine months were passed away and totally lost, in a state of pregnancy; which is more than forty times longer time, than God employed in making the world, according to the Bible account. Secondly; several years of Christ's life were lost in a state of human infancy. But the universe was in maturity the moment it existed. Thirdly; Christ, as Luke asserts, was thirty years old before he began to preach what they call his mission. Millions of souls died in the mean time without knowing it. Fourthly; it was above three hundred years from that time before the book called the New Testament was compiled into a written copy, before which time there was no such book. Fifthly; it was above a thousand years after that before it could be circulated; because neither Jesus nor his apostles had knowledge of, or were inspired with the art of printing: and consequently, as the means for making it universally known did not exist, the means were not equal to the end, and therefore it is not the work of God.

"I will here subjoin the nineteenth Psalm, which is truly deistical, and to shew how universally and instantaneously the works of God make themselves known, compared with this pretended salvation by Jesus Christ.

"Psalm 19th. 'The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work—Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge—There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard—Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a chamber for the Sun. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race—his going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.'

"Now had the news of the salvation by Jesus Christ been inscribed on the face of the Sun and the Moon, in characters that all nations would have understood, the whole earth had known it in twenty-four hours, and all nations would have believed it; whereas, though it is now almost two thousand years since, as they tell us, Christ came upon earth, not a twentieth part of the people of the earth know any thing of it, and among those who do, the wiser part do not believe it.

"I have now reader, gone through all the passages called prophecies of Jesus Christ, and shewn there is no such thing.

"I have examined the story told of Jesus Christ, and compared the several circumstances of it with that revelation, which, as Mid-

dleton wisely says, God has made to us of his Power and Wisdom in the structure of the universe, and by which every thing ascribed to him is to be tried. The result is, that the story of Christ has not one trait, either in its character, or in the means employed, that bears the least resemblance to the power and wisdom of God, as demonstrated in the creation of the universe. All means are human means, slow, uncertain and inadequate to the accomplishment of the end proposed, and therefore the whole is a fabulous invention, and undeserving of credit.

“The priests of the present day profess to believe it. They gain their living by it, and they exclaim against something they call infidelity. I will define what it is. HE THAT BELIEVES IN THE STORY OF CHRIST IS AN INFIDEL TO GOD.

THOMAS PAINE.

APPENDIX.

Contradictory Doctrines in the New Testament, between Matthew and Mark.

“IN the New Testament, Mark chap. 16, ver. 16, it is said, ‘He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned.’ This is making salvation, or in other words, the happiness of man after this life, to depend entirely on believing, or on what Christians call faith.

“But the 25th chapter of ‘*The gospel according to Matthew*,’ makes Jesus Christ to preach a direct contrary doctrine to ‘*The gospel according to Mark*,’ for it makes salvation, or the future happiness of man, to depend entirely on *good works*, and those good works are not works done to God, for he needs them not, but good works done to man.

“The passage referred to in Matthew, is the account there given of what it calls the last day, or the day of judgement where the whole world is represented to be divided into two parts, the righteous and the unrighteous, metaphorically called the *sheep* and the *goats*.

“To the one part, called the righteous, or the sheep, it says, ‘Come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world—for I was an hungered and ye gave me meat—I was thirsty and ye gave me drink—I was a stranger and ye took me in—Naked and ye clothed me—I was sick and ye visited me—I was in prison and ye came unto me.

“Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord when saw we thee an hungered and fed thee, or thirsty and gave thee drink—when saw we thee a stranger and took thee in, or naked and clothed thee—or when saw we thee sick and in prison and came unto thee.

“And the king shall answer and say unto them, *Verily, I say unto you, in as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*’

“ Here is nothing about believing in Christ ; nothing about that phantom of the imagination, called *Faith*. The works here spoken of, are works of humanity and benevolence, or in other words, an endeavour to make God's creation happy. Here is nothing about preaching and making long prayers, as if God must be dictated to by man ; not about building churches and meetings, nor hiring priests to pray and preach in them. Here is nothing about predestination, that lust which some men have for damning one another. Here is nothing about baptism, whether by sprinkling or plunging, nor about any of those ceremonies for which the Christian church has been fighting, persecuting, and burning each other, ever since the Christian church began.

“ If it be asked, why do not Priests preach the doctrine contained in this chapter ? The answer is easy : they are not fond of practising it themselves. It does not answer for their trade. They had rather get than give. Charity, with them, begins and ends at home.

“ Had it been said, *Come, ye blessed, ye have been liberal in paying the preachers of the word ; ye have contributed largely towards building churches and meeting houses*, there is not a hired priest in Christendom but would have thundered it continually in the ears of his congregation. But as it is altogether on good works done to men, the priests pass it over in silence, and they will abuse me for bringing it into notice.

THOMAS PAINE.

“ *My Private Thoughts on a Future State.*

“ I HAVE said in the first part of the Age of Reason, that *I hope for happiness after this life*. This hope is comfortable to me, and I presume not to go beyond the comfortable idea of hope, with respect to a future state.

“ I consider myself in the hands of my Creator, and that he will dispose of me after this life, consistently with his justice and goodness. I leave all these matters to him as my Creator and friend, and I hold it to be presumption in man to make an article of faith as to what the Creator will do with us hereafter.

“ I do not believe because a man and a woman make a child, that it imposes on the Creator, the unavoidable obligation of keeping the being so made in eternal existence hereafter. It is in his power to do so, or not do so, and it is not in our power to decide which he will do.

“ The book called the New Testament, which I hold to be fabulous, and have shewn to be false, gives an account in the 25th chapter of Matthew, of what is there called the last day, or the day of judgment. The whole world according to that account is divided into two parts, the righteous and the unrighteous, figuratively called the sheep and the goats. They are then to receive their sentence.

To the one, figuratively called the sheep, it says, '*Come ye blessed of my father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*' To the other figuratively called the goats, it says, '*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his angels.*'

"Now the case is, the world cannot be thus divided—the moral world, like the physical world, is composed of numerous degrees of character, running imperceptibly one into the other, in such a manner that no fixed point of division can be found in either. That point is no where, or is every where. The whole world might be divided into two parts numerically, but not as to moral character; and therefore the metaphor of dividing them, as sheep and goats can be divided, whose difference is marked by their external figure, is absurd. All sheep are still sheep; all goats are still goats; it is their physical nature to be so. But one part of the world are not all good alike, nor the other part all wicked alike. There are some exceedingly good; others exceedingly wicked. There is another description of men who cannot be ranked with either the one or the other—they belong neither to the sheep nor the goats; and there is still another description of them, who are so very insignificant both in character and conduct as not to be worth the trouble of damning or saving, or of raising from the dead.

"My own opinion is, that those whose lives have been spent in doing good, and endeavouring to make their fellow mortals happy, for this is the only way in which we can serve God, *will be happy hereafter*; and that the very wicked will meet with some punishment. But those who are neither good nor bad, or are too insignificant for notice, will be dropt entirely. This is my opinion. It is consistent with my idea of God's justice, and with the reason that God has given me, and I gratefully know he has given me a large share of that divine gift.

THOMAS PAINE.

These Gentlemen are Mr. Paine's notions of a future state, they are not mine.

I have now gone through the whole of the three books which are brought into the information, and you must be convinced, Gentlemen, that there is not an immoral expression in them, save where it be a quotation. I think I have shewn you that the author has evinced an enlarged and liberal mind. The opinions and sentiments of Mr. Paine on the subject under discussion are my opinions and sentiments. This work contains a body of truth to which I subscribe. The author has certainly spoken disrespectfully of certain passages in the Old and New Testament, but it should be considered that he believed nothing of the character given

them, and his own apology is, that, he cannot pay complaisance to error and falsehood. An apology quite sufficient to satisfy any reasonable mind.

I now feel exhausted, and beg your Lordship to adjourn the Court till to-morrow.

Chief Justice.—Have you much more to offer the Jury in defence.

Mr. Carlile.—If my bodily strength permits I have enough to last till Saturday night.

Chief Justice.—As I would not willingly curtail your defence, if you request me, I shall now adjourn till to-morrow.

Mr. Carlile.—I request it, my Lord.

The *Chief Justice*, Addressing the Jury, said that he was not desirous of imposing upon them any restraints. They would of course take care not to hold communications with any persons on the subject of the trial. The Jury signified their acquiescence; and the Chief Justice addressed himself to Mr. Carlile, saying, perhaps you would leave your books and notes with the Officer of the Court.

Mr. Carlile.—I thank you, my Lord, I had rather not.

On leaving the Court the Defendant, accompanied by Mr. Hunt, Mr. Sherwin, and Mr. Fry, was received with warm applause by the people gathered about the Hall.

